



Economy Profile:
Hong Kong SAR, China

Doing business in a
more transparent world

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1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433
Telephone 202-473-1000
Internet www.worldbank.org

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Copies of *Doing Business 2012: Doing Business in a More Transparent World*, *Doing Business 2011: Making a Difference for Entrepreneurs*, *Doing Business 2010: Reforming through Difficult Times*, *Doing Business 2009*, *Doing Business 2008*, *Doing Business 2007: How to Reform*, *Doing Business in 2006: Creating Jobs*, *Doing Business in 2005: Removing Obstacles to Growth* and *Doing Business in 2004: Understanding Regulations* may be downloaded at www.doingbusiness.org.

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CONTENTS

Introduction	4
The business environment	5
Starting a business	14
Dealing with construction permits.....	23
Getting electricity.....	33
Registering property.....	41
Getting credit.....	51
Protecting investors.....	58
Paying taxes.....	68
Trading across borders	75
Enforcing contracts	84
Resolving insolvency.....	91
Data notes	97
Resources on the <i>Doing Business</i> website	102

INTRODUCTION

Doing Business sheds light on how easy or difficult it is for a local entrepreneur to open and run a small to medium-size business when complying with relevant regulations. It measures and tracks changes in regulations affecting 10 areas in the life cycle of a business: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

In a series of annual reports *Doing Business* presents quantitative indicators on business regulations and the protection of property rights that can be compared across 183 economies, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, over time. The data set covers 46 economies in Sub-Saharan Africa, 32 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 24 in East Asia and the Pacific, 24 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 18 in the Middle East and North Africa and 8 in South Asia, as well as 31 OECD high-income economies. The indicators are used to analyze economic outcomes and identify what reforms have worked, where and why.

This economy profile presents the *Doing Business* indicators for Hong Kong SAR, China. To allow useful comparison, it also provides data for other selected economies (comparator economies) for each indicator. The data in this report are current as of June 1, 2011

(except for the paying taxes indicators, which cover the period January–December 2010).

The *Doing Business* methodology has limitations. Other areas important to business—such as an economy's proximity to large markets, the quality of its infrastructure services (other than those related to trading across borders and getting electricity), the security of property from theft and looting, the transparency of government procurement, macroeconomic conditions or the underlying strength of institutions—are not directly studied by *Doing Business*. The indicators refer to a specific type of business, generally a local limited liability company operating in the largest business city. Because standard assumptions are used in the data collection, comparisons and benchmarks are valid across economies. The data not only highlight the extent of obstacles to doing business; they also help identify the source of those obstacles, supporting policy makers in designing regulatory reform.

More information is available in the full report. *Doing Business 2012* presents the indicators, analyzes their relationship with economic outcomes and recommends regulatory reforms. The data, along with information on ordering *Doing Business 2012*, are available on the *Doing Business* website at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

For policy makers trying to improve their economy's regulatory environment for business, a good place to start is to find out how it compares with the regulatory environment in other economies. *Doing Business* provides an aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business based on indicator sets that measure and benchmark regulations applying to domestic small to medium-size businesses through their life cycle. Economies are ranked from 1 to 183 by the ease of doing business index. For each economy the index is calculated as the ranking on the simple average of its percentile rankings on each of the 10 topics included in the index in *Doing Business 2012*: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency. The ranking on each topic is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators (see the data notes for more details).¹

The aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business benchmarks each economy's performance on the indicators against that of all other economies in the *Doing Business* sample (figure 1.1). While this ranking tells much about the business environment in an economy, it does not tell the whole story. The ranking on the ease of doing business, and the underlying indicators, do not measure all aspects of the business environment that matter to firms and investors or that affect the competitiveness of the economy. Still, a high ranking does mean that the government has created a regulatory environment conducive to operating a business.

ECONOMY OVERVIEW

Region: East Asia & Pacific

Income category: High income

Population: 7,041,270

GNI per capita (US\$): 32,900.00

DB2012 rank: 2

DB2011 rank: 2

Change in rank: 0

Note: See the data notes for sources and definitions.

¹ Except for the ease of getting credit, for which the percentile rankings on its component indicators are weighted, the depth of credit information index at 37.5% and the strength of legal rights index at 62.5%.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Figure 1.1 Where economies stand in the global ranking on the ease of doing business



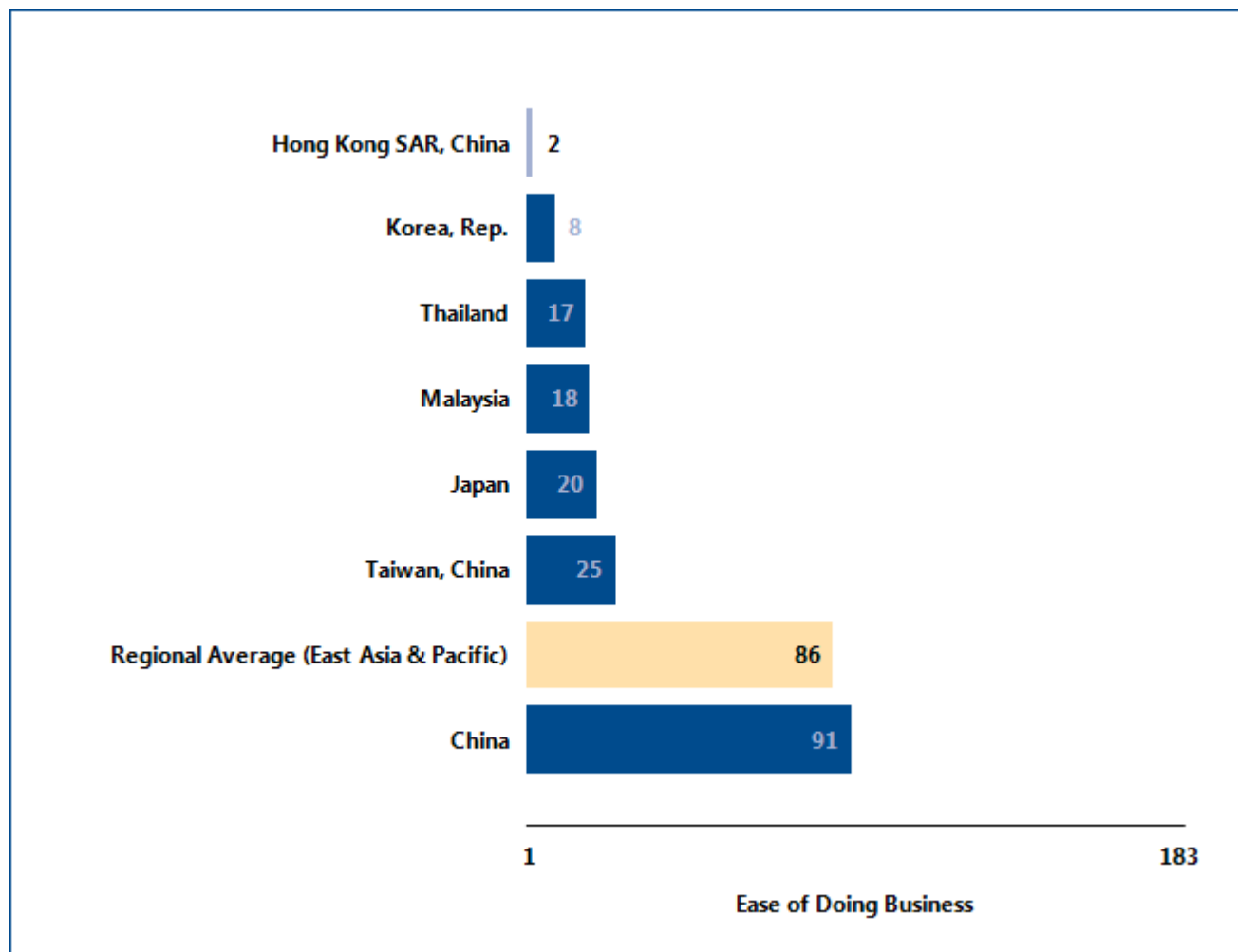
Source: *Doing Business* database.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

For policy makers, knowing where their economy stands in the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business is useful. Also useful is to know how it ranks compared with other economies and compared with

the regional average (figure 1.2). The economy's rankings on the topics included in the ease of doing business index provide another perspective (figure 1.3).

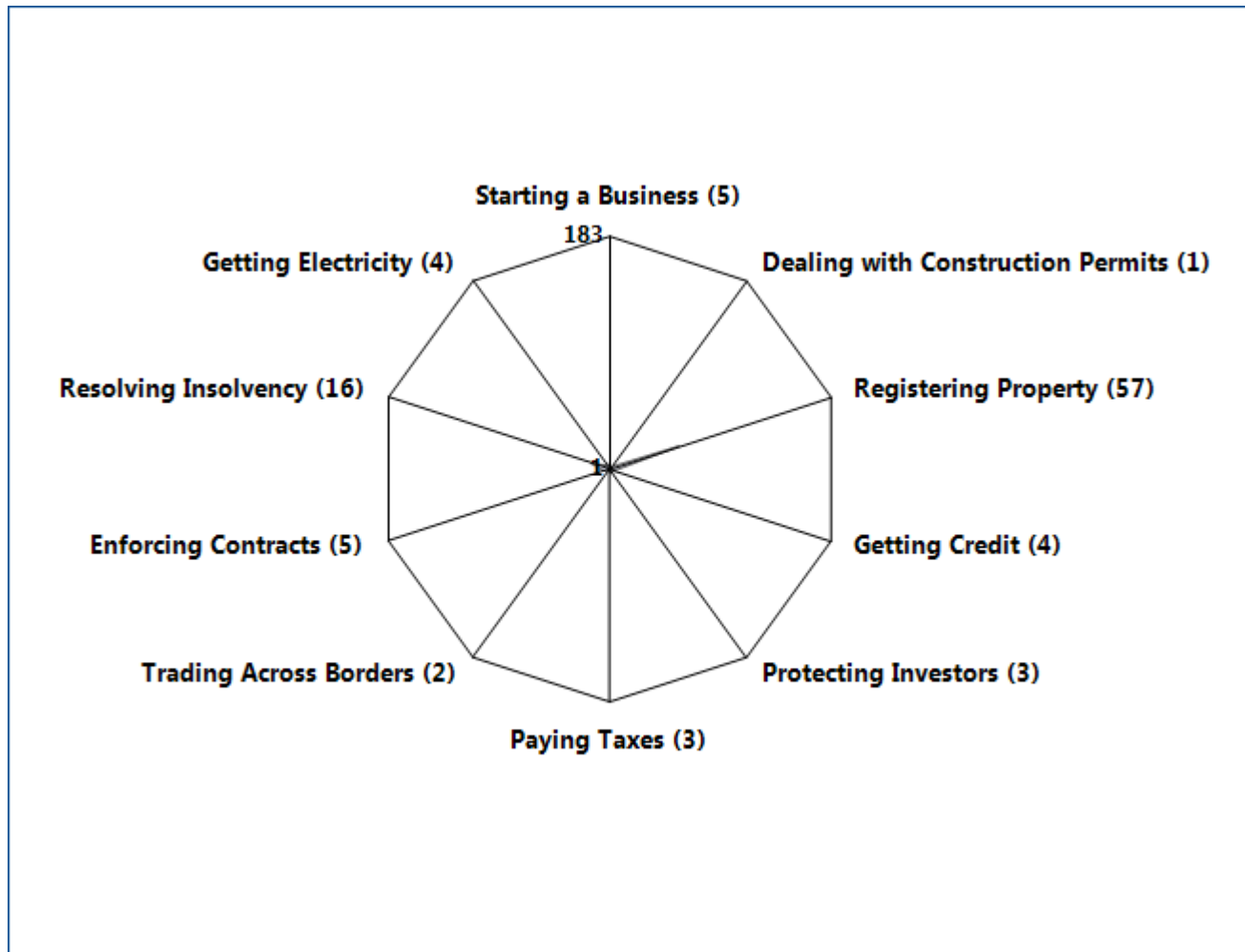
Figure 1.2 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of doing business



Source: *Doing Business* database.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Figure 1.3 How Hong Kong SAR, China ranks on *Doing Business* topics



Source: *Doing Business* database.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Just as the overall ranking on the ease of doing business tells only part of the story, so do changes in that ranking. Yearly movements in rankings can provide some indication of changes in an economy's regulatory environment for firms, but they are always relative. An economy's ranking might change because of developments in other economies. An economy that implemented business regulation reforms may fail to rise in the rankings (or may even drop) if it is passed by others whose business regulation reforms had a more significant impact as measured by *Doing Business*.

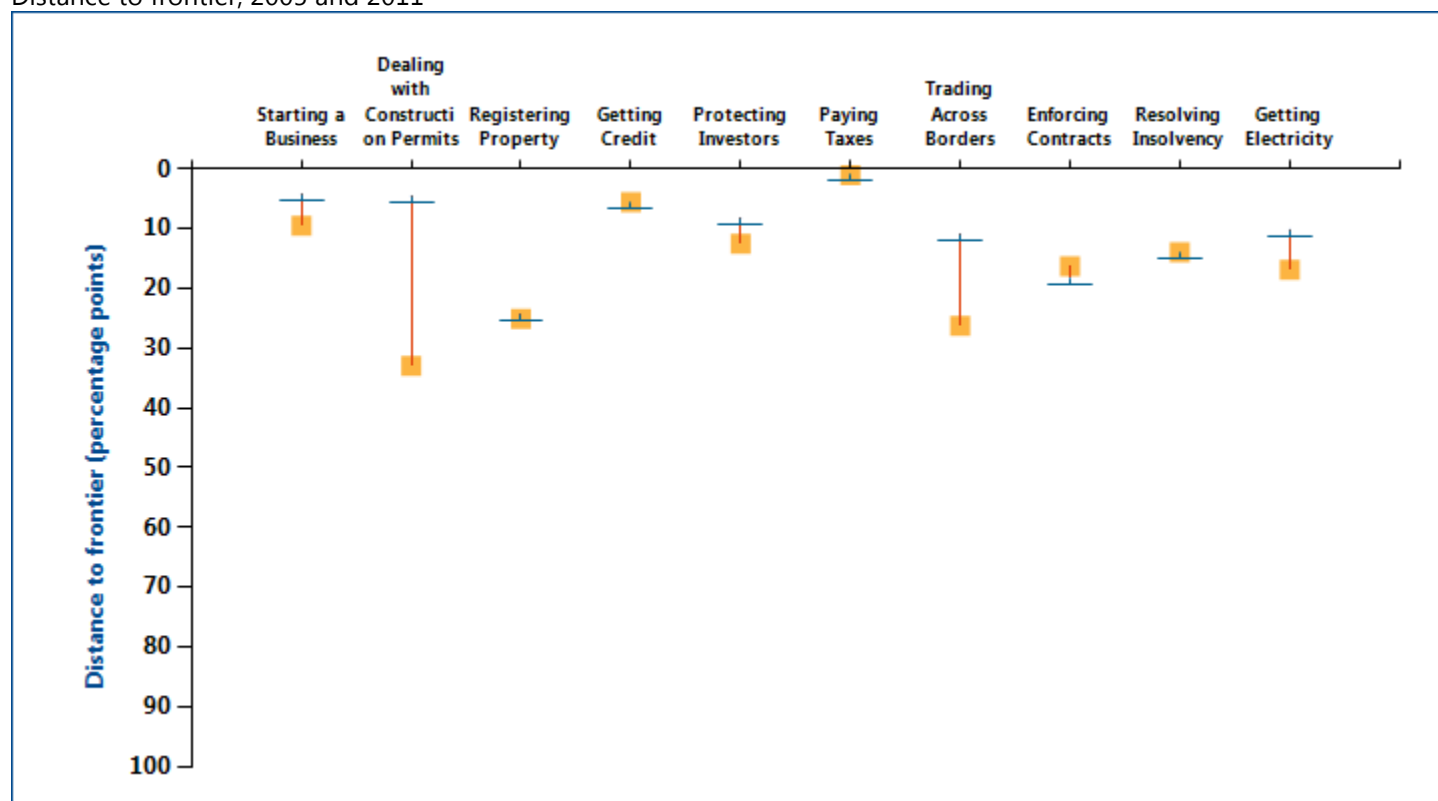
Moreover, year-to-year changes in the overall rankings do not reflect how the business regulatory environment in an economy has changed over time—or how it has changed in different areas. To aid in assessing such changes, *Doing Business 2012* introduces the distance to frontier measure.

This measure shows the distance of each economy to the “frontier,” a synthetic measure based on the most efficient practice or highest score observed for each *Doing Business* indicator across all economies and years included in the *Doing Business* sample since 2005. Nine areas of business regulation are covered.

Comparing the measure for an economy at 2 points in time allows users to assess how much the economy's regulatory environment as measured by *Doing Business* has changed over time—how far it has moved toward (or away from) the most efficient practices and strongest regulations in areas covered by *Doing Business* (figure 1.4). The results may show that the pace of change varies widely across the areas measured. They also may show that an economy is relatively close to the frontier in some areas and relatively far from it in others.

Figure 1.4 How far has Hong Kong SAR, China come in the areas measured by *Doing Business*?

Distance to frontier, 2005 and 2011



Note: For economies added to the *Doing Business* sample after 2005, the starting point is the year in which they were added: 2006 for Montenegro; 2007 for Brunei Darussalam, Liberia and Luxembourg; 2008 for The Bahamas, Bahrain and Qatar; and 2009 for Cyprus and Kosovo. See the data notes for more details on the distance to frontier measure.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The absolute values of the indicators tell another part of the story (table 1.1). The indicators, on their own or in comparison with the indicators of a good practice economy or those of comparator economies in the region, may reveal bottlenecks reflected in large numbers of procedures, long delays or high costs. Or they may reveal unexpected strengths in an area of

business regulation—such as a regulatory process that can be completed with a small number of procedures in a few days and at a low cost. Comparison of the economy's indicators today with those in the previous year may show where substantial bottlenecks persist—and where they are diminishing.

Table 1.1 Summary of *Doing Business* indicators for Hong Kong SAR, China

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2012	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2011	China DB2012	Japan DB2012	Korea, Rep. DB2012	Malaysia DB2012	Taiwan, China DB2012	Thailand DB2012	Best performer globally DB2012
Starting a Business (rank)	5	6	151	107	24	50	16	78	New Zealand (1)
Procedures (number)	3	3	14	8	5	4	3	5	Canada (1)*
Time (days)	3	6	38	23	7	6	10	29	New Zealand (1)
Cost (% of income per capita)	1.9	2.0	3.5	7.5	14.6	16.4	2.5	6.2	Denmark (0.0)*
Paid-in Min. Capital (% of income per capita)	0.0	0.0	100.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	82 Economies (0.0)*
Dealing with Construction Permits (rank)	1	1	179	63	26	113	87	14	Hong Kong SAR, China (1)
Procedures (number)	6	6	33	14	12	22	25	8	Denmark (5)
Time (days)	67	67	311	193	30	260	125	157	Singapore (26)*
Cost (% of income per capita)	17.8	19.4	444.1	27.9	79.5	7.1	41.9	9.5	Qatar (1.1)

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2012	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2011	China DB2012	Japan DB2012	Korea, Rep. DB2012	Malaysia DB2012	Taiwan, China DB2012	Thailand DB2012	Best performer globally DB2012
Getting Electricity (rank)	4	22	115	26	11	59	3	9	Iceland (1)
Procedures (number)	4	4	5	3	4	6	4	4	Germany (3)*
Time (days)	43	93	145	117	49	51	23	35	Germany (17)
Cost (% of income per capita)	1.7	1.9	640.9	0.0	38.6	95.5	52.4	77.6	Japan (0.0)
Registering Property (rank)	57	55	40	58	71	59	33	28	New Zealand (3)
Procedures (number)	5	5	4	6	7	5	3	2	Portugal (1)*
Time (days)	36	36	29	14	11	48	5	2	Portugal (1)
Cost (% of property value)	4.1	4.2	3.6	5.7	5.1	3.3	6.2	6.3	Slovak Republic (0.0)
Getting Credit (rank)	4	4	67	24	8	1	67	67	United Kingdom (1)*
Strength of legal rights index (0-10)	10	10	6	7	8	10	5	5	New Zealand (10)*
Depth of credit information index (0-6)	5	5	4	6	6	6	5	5	Japan (6)*
Public registry coverage (% of adults)	0.0	0.0	82.5	0.0	0.0	49.4	0.0	0.0	Portugal (86.2)
Private bureau coverage (% of adults)	86.3	72.0	0.0	99.0	100.0	83.4	90.9	41.7	New Zealand (100.0)*
Protecting Investors (rank)	3	3	97	17	79	4	79	13	New Zealand (1)
Extent of disclosure index (0-10)	10	10	10	7	7	10	7	10	France (10)*

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2012	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2011	China DB2012	Japan DB2012	Korea, Rep. DB2012	Malaysia DB2012	Taiwan, China DB2012	Thailand DB2012	Best performer globally DB2012
Extent of director liability index (0-10)	8	8	1	6	2	9	4	7	Singapore (9)*
Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)	9	9	4	8	7	7	5	6	New Zealand (10)*
Strength of investor protection index (0-10)	9.0	9.0	5.0	7.0	5.3	8.7	5.3	7.7	New Zealand (9.7)
Paying Taxes (rank)	3	3	122	120	38	41	71	100	Canada (8)
Payments (number per year)	3	3	7	14	12	13	15	23	Norway (4)
Time (hours per year)	80	80	398	330	225	133	245	264	Luxembourg (59)
Trading Across Borders (rank)	2	2	60	16	4	29	23	17	Singapore (1)
Documents to export (number)	4	4	8	3	3	6	6	5	France (2)
Time to export (days)	5	6	21	10	7	17	12	14	Hong Kong SAR, China (5)*
Cost to export (US\$ per container)	575	625	500	880	680	450	655	625	Malaysia (450)
Documents to import (number)	4	4	5	5	3	7	6	5	France (2)
Time to import (days)	5	5	24	11	7	14	12	13	Singapore (4)
Cost to import (US\$ per container)	565	600	545	970	695	435	720	750	Malaysia (435)
Enforcing Contracts (rank)	5	5	16	34	2	31	88	24	Luxembourg (1)

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2012	Hong Kong SAR, China DB2011	China DB2012	Japan DB2012	Korea, Rep. DB2012	Malaysia DB2012	Taiwan, China DB2012	Thailand DB2012	Best performer globally DB2012
Time (days)	280	280	406	360	230	425	510	479	Singapore (150)
Cost (% of claim)	21.2	21.2	11.1	32.2	10.3	27.5	17.7	12.3	Bhutan (0.1)
Procedures (number)	26	26	34	30	33	29	45	36	Ireland (21)*
Resolving Insolvency (rank)	16	15	75	1	13	47	14	51	Japan (1)
Time (years)	1.1	1.1	1.7	0.6	1.5	1.5	1.9	2.7	Ireland (0.4)
Cost (% of estate)	9	9	22	4	4	15	4	36	Singapore (1)*
Recovery rate (cents on the dollar)	81.2	81.2	36.1	92.7	82.3	44.6	82.1	43.3	Japan (92.7)

Note: The methodology for the paying taxes indicators changed in *Doing Business 2012*; see the data notes for details. For these indicators, the best performer globally is the economy that has implemented the most efficient practices in its tax system and is not necessarily the one with the highest ranking. For more information on “no practice” marks, see the data notes for details.

* Two or more economies share the top ranking on this indicator. A number shown in place of an economy’s name indicates the number of economies that share the top ranking on the indicator. For a list of these economies, see the *Doing Business* website (<http://www.doingbusiness.org>).

Source: *Doing Business* database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

Formal registration of companies has many immediate benefits for the companies and for business owners and employees. Legal entities can outlive their founders. Resources are pooled as several shareholders join forces to start a company. Formally registered companies have access to services and institutions from courts to banks as well as to new markets. And their employees can benefit from protections provided by the law. An additional benefit comes with limited liability companies. These limit the financial liability of company owners to their investments, so personal assets of the owners are not put at risk. Where governments make registration easy, more entrepreneurs start businesses in the formal sector, creating more good jobs and generating more revenue for the government.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the ease of starting a business in an economy by recording all procedures that are officially required or commonly done in practice by an entrepreneur to start up and formally operate an industrial or commercial business—as well as the time and cost required to complete these procedures. It also records the paid-in minimum capital that companies must deposit before registration (or within 3 months). The ranking on the ease of starting a business is the simple average of the percentile rankings on the 4 component indicators: procedures, time, cost and paid-in minimum capital requirement.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the procedures. It assumes that all information is readily available to the entrepreneur and that there has been no prior contact with officials. It also assumes that all government and nongovernment entities involved in the process function without corruption. And it assumes that the business:

- Is a limited liability company, located in the largest business city.
- Conducts general commercial or industrial activities.

WHAT THE STARTING A BUSINESS INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to legally start and operate a company (number)

- Preregistration (for example, name verification or reservation, notarization)
- Registration in the economy's largest business city
- Postregistration (for example, social security registration, company seal)

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

- Does not include time spent gathering information
- Each procedure starts on a separate day
- Procedure completed once final document is received
- No prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of income per capita)

- Official costs only, no bribes
- No professional fees unless services required by law

Paid-in minimum capital (% of income per capita)

- Deposited in a bank or with a notary before registration (or within 3 months)
- Has a start-up capital of 10 times income per capita.
- Has a turnover of at least 100 times income per capita.
- Does not qualify for any special benefits.
- Does not own real estate.
- Is 100% domestically owned.

STARTING A BUSINESS

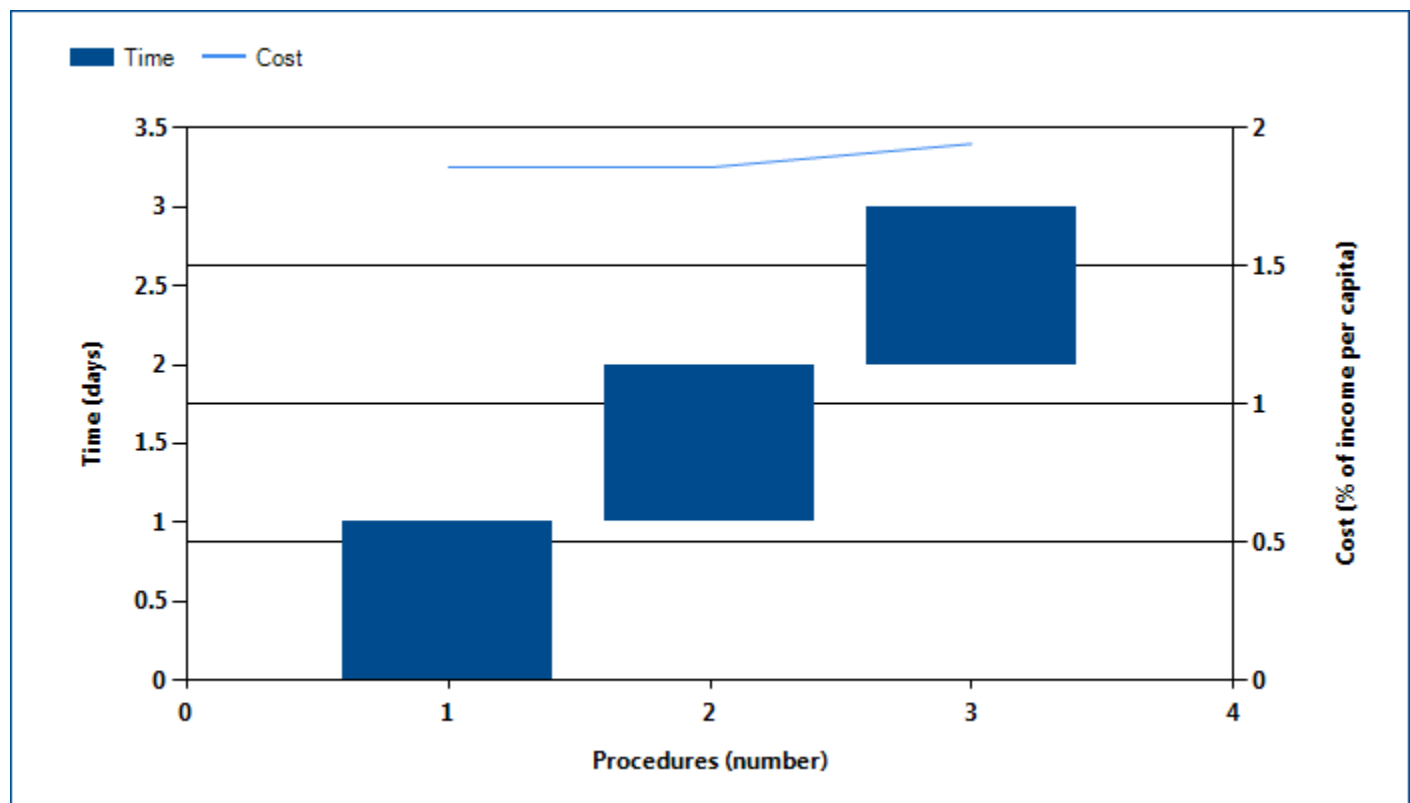
Where does the economy stand today?

What does it take to start a business in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, starting a business there requires 3

procedures, takes 3 days, costs 1.9% of income per capita and requires paid-in minimum capital of 0.0% of income per capita (figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 What it takes to start a business in Hong Kong SAR, China

Paid-in minimum capital (% of income per capita): 0.0



Note: For details on the procedures reflected here, see the summary at the end of this chapter.

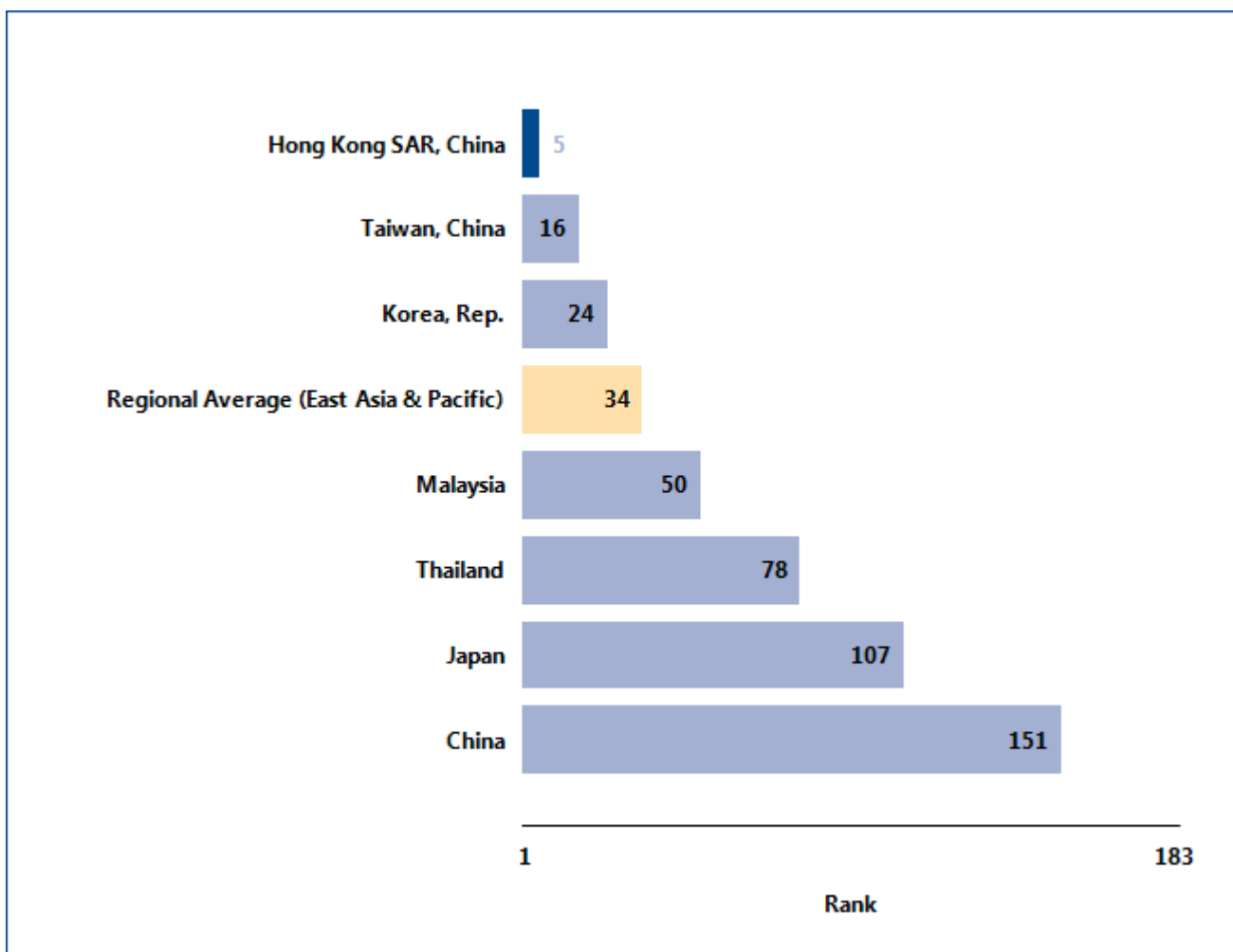
Source: *Doing Business* database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 5 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of starting a business (figure 2.2). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide

other useful information for assessing how easy it is for an entrepreneur in Hong Kong SAR, China to start a business.

Figure 2.2 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of starting a business



Source: *Doing Business* database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how easy (or difficult) it is to start a business in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data over time show which aspects

of the process have changed—and which have not (table 2.1). That can help identify where the potential for improvement is greatest.

Table 2.1 The ease of starting a business in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2004	DB2005	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	5
Procedures (number)	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	3
Time (days)	11	11	11	11	11	11	6	6	3
Cost (% of income per capita)	2.4	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.1	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.9
Paid-in Min. Capital (% of income per capita)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

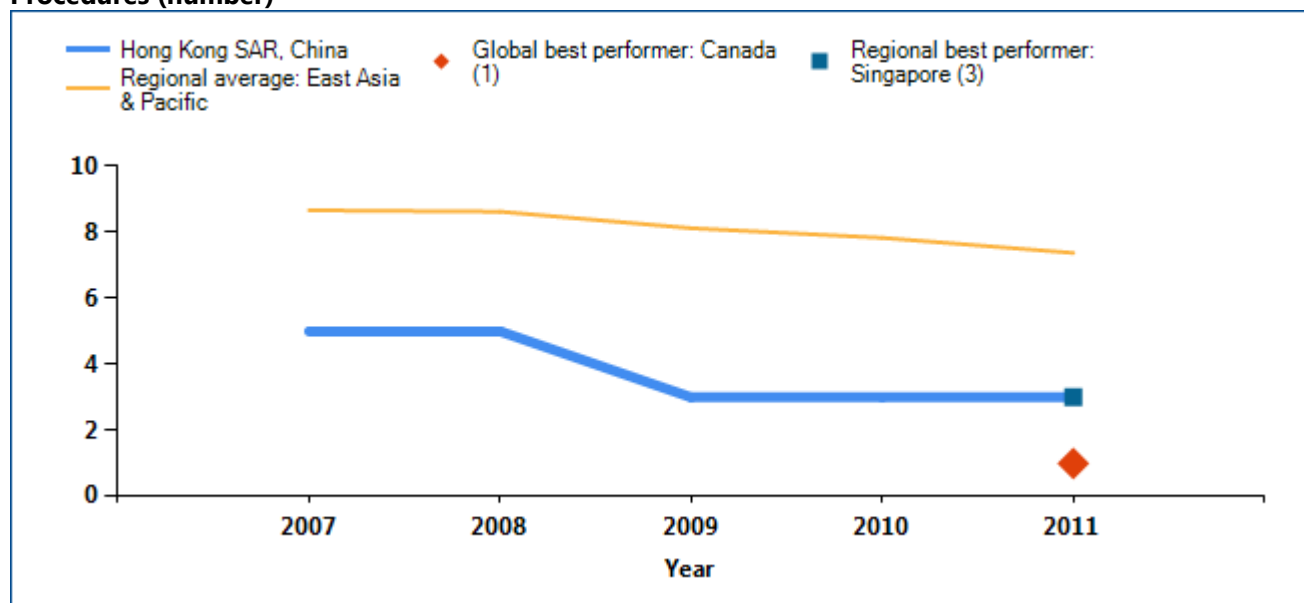
STARTING A BUSINESS

Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the procedures, time, cost or paid-in minimum capital required to start a business (figure 2.3). These economies may provide a model for

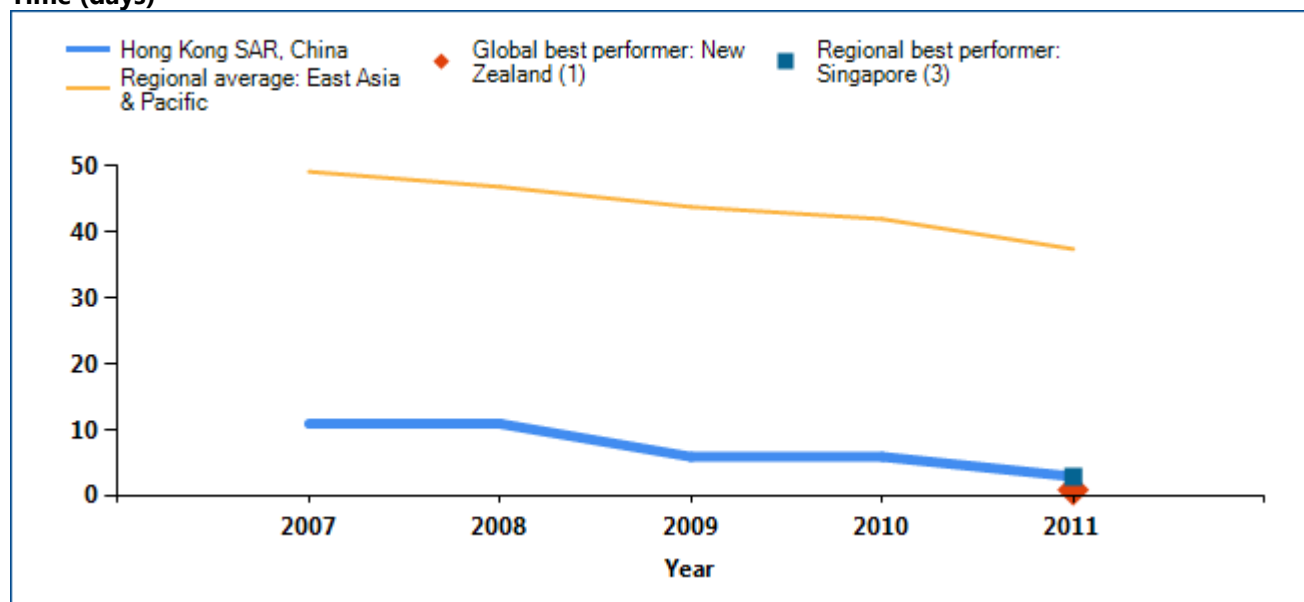
Hong Kong SAR, China on ways to improve the ease of starting a business. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

Figure 2.3 Has starting a business become easier over time?

Procedures (number)

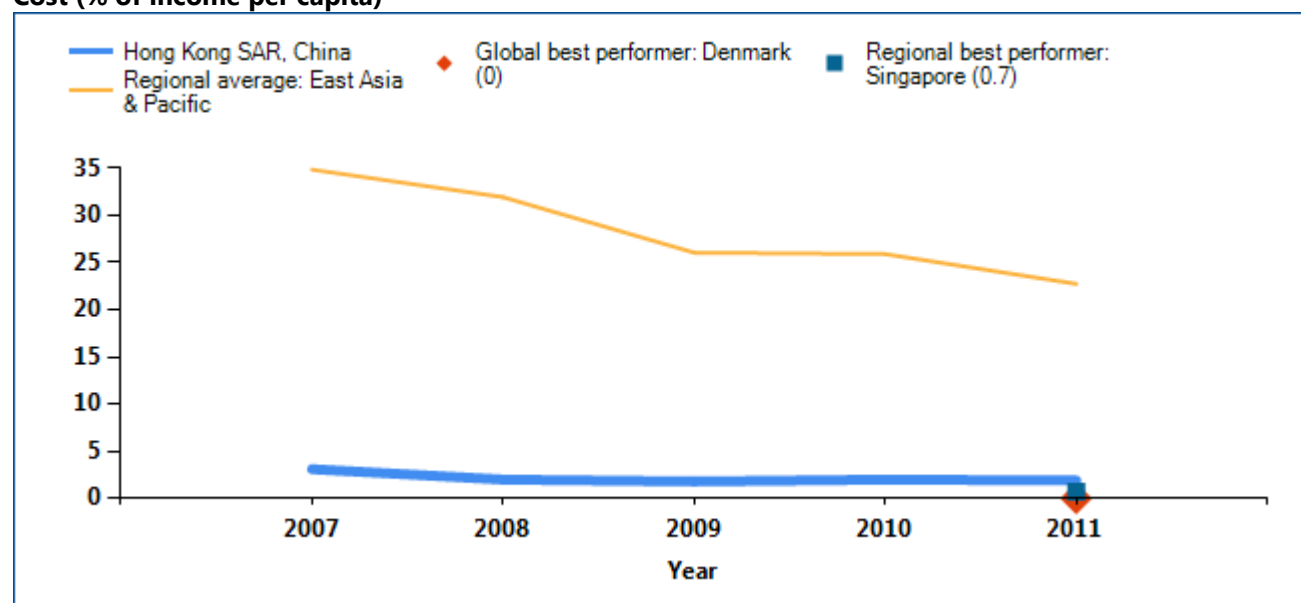


Time (days)

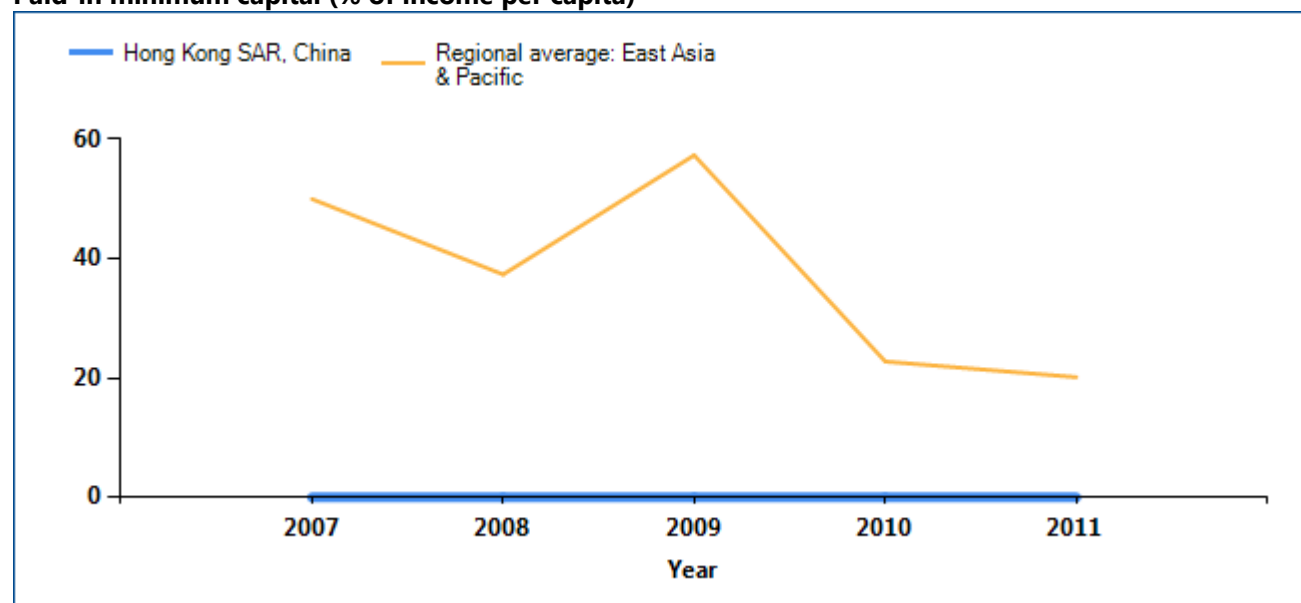


STARTING A BUSINESS

Cost (% of income per capita)



Paid-in minimum capital (% of income per capita)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator. In the case of paid-in minimum capital, 82 economies globally and 14 economies in East Asia & Pacific have no paid-in minimum capital.

Source: Doing Business database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

Economies around the world have taken steps making it easier to start a business—streamlining procedures by setting up a one-stop shop, making procedures simpler or faster by introducing technology and reducing or eliminating minimum capital requirements. Many have undertaken business registration reforms in stages—and they often are part of a larger regulatory reform program. Among the benefits have been

greater firm satisfaction and savings and more registered businesses, financial resources and job opportunities.

What business registration reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 2.2)?

Table 2.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made starting a business easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	Hong Kong SAR (China) made starting a business easier by introducing online electronic services for company and business registration.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	Business start-up was eased by simplifying registration and merging procedures.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

STARTING A BUSINESS

What are the details?

Underlying the indicators shown in this chapter for Hong Kong SAR, China is a set of specific procedures—the bureaucratic and legal steps that an entrepreneur must complete to incorporate and register a new firm. These are identified by *Doing Business* through collaboration with relevant local professionals and the study of laws, regulations and publicly available information on business entry in that economy. Following is a detailed summary of those procedures, along with the associated time and cost. These procedures are those that apply to a company matching the standard assumptions (the “standardized company”) used by *Doing Business* in collecting the data (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators measure).

STANDARDIZED COMPANY

City: Hong Kong

Legal Form: Limited Liability Company

Start-up capital: 10 times GNI per capita

Paid-in minimum capital (% of income per capita): 0.0

Summary of procedures for starting a business in Hong Kong SAR, China—and the time and cost

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
1	<p>Choose a company name and obtain a certificate of incorporation</p> <p>A company name can be searched online free of charge at the Companies Registry. A certificate of incorporation will be issued upon the filing of an incorporation form, which has been introduced since July 2008, and a copy of the memorandum and articles of association of the company with the Companies Registry. The incorporation form, which contains comprehensive information on the address of registered office and particulars of the first secretary and the first directors of a company, enhances disclosure of essential information of a company upon incorporation. The document registration process was also streamlined as the new company is no longer required to file separate notifications reporting on those particulars after incorporation. Upon the implementation of electronic incorporation and one-stop service for company incorporation and business registration in late 2010, the whole process of submitting an electronic application, making payment of incorporation fees and business registration fee, and issuing to a successful applicant the Certificate of Incorporation and Business Registration Certificate can be completed within 1 day.</p>	1 day	HKD 1,720 application fee + 0.1% of authorized share capital, capped at 30,000+ 450 for business registration levy.
2	<p>Sign up Employee Compensation Insurance and Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Schemes with a private company or a bank</p> <p>Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, an employer must possess a valid insurance policy to cover its employees (both full- and part-time) who are fatally injured or disabled due to accidents arising out of and during employment. In addition, all employees ages 18–65</p>	1 day	no charge

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
	and employed for 60 days or more under an employment contract (regardless of the number of work hours) must be covered by the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Schemes Ordinance (except for persons exempted from the scheme) and be enrolled in an MPF scheme. The employer is also required to display the participation certificate issued by the Mandatory Provident Fund Authority at the work premises. The employer can arrange this insurance and the MPF scheme with any insurance company or bank in Hong Kong.		
3	Make a corporate seal and company rubber stamp	1 day	HKD 215

* Takes place simultaneously with another procedure.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Regulation of construction is critical to protect the public. But it needs to be efficient, to avoid excessive constraints on a sector that plays an important part in every economy. Where complying with building regulations is excessively costly in time and money, many builders opt out. They may pay bribes to pass inspections or simply build illegally, leading to hazardous construction that puts public safety at risk. Where compliance is simple, straightforward and inexpensive, everyone is better off.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business records the procedures, time and cost for a business to obtain all the necessary approvals to build a simple commercial warehouse in the economy's largest business city, connect it to basic utilities and register the property so that it can be used as collateral or transferred to another entity.

The ranking on the ease of dealing with construction permits is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the warehouse, including the utility connections.

The business:

- Is a limited liability company operating in the construction business and located in the largest business city.
- Is domestically owned and operated.
- Has 60 builders and other employees.

The warehouse:

- Is a new construction (there was no previous construction on the land).
- Has complete architectural and technical plans prepared by a licensed architect.

WHAT THE DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to legally build a warehouse (number)

Submitting all relevant documents and obtaining all necessary clearances, licenses, permits and certificates

Completing all required notifications and receiving all necessary inspections

Obtaining utility connections for water, sewerage and a fixed telephone line

Registering the warehouse after its completion (if required for use as collateral or for transfer of the warehouse)

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

Does not include time spent gathering information

Each procedure starts on a separate day

Procedure completed once final document is received

No prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of income per capita)

Official costs only, no bribes

- Will be connected to water, sewerage (sewage system, septic tank or their equivalent) and a fixed telephone line. The connection to each utility network will be 10 meters (32 feet, 10 inches) long.
- Will be used for general storage, such as of books or stationery (not for goods requiring special conditions).
- Will take 30 weeks to construct (excluding all delays due to administrative and regulatory requirements).

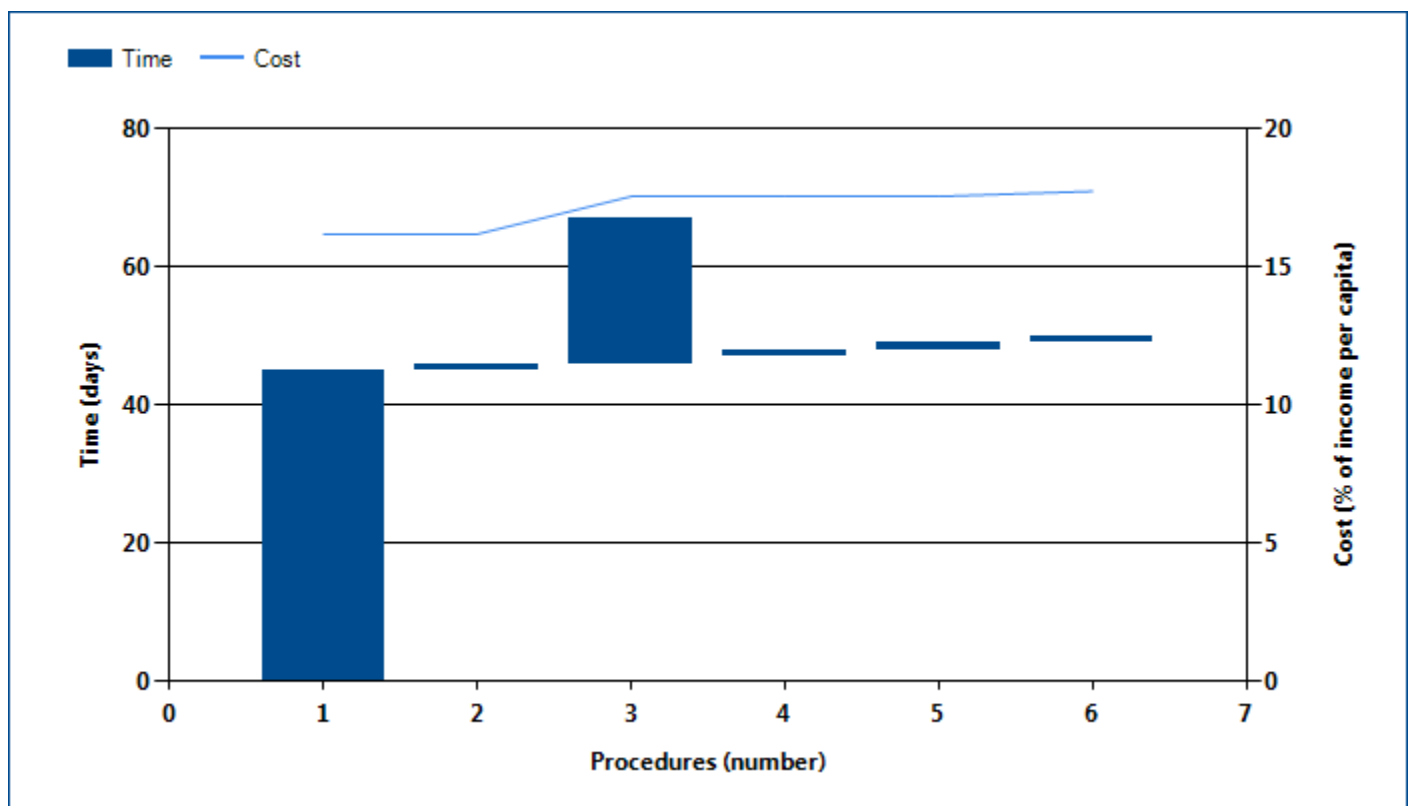
DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Where does the economy stand today?

What does it take to comply with the formalities to build a warehouse in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, dealing

with construction permits there requires 6 procedures, takes 67 days and costs 17.8% of income per capita (figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 What it takes to comply with formalities to build a warehouse in Hong Kong SAR, China



Note: For details on the procedures reflected here, see the summary at the end of this chapter.

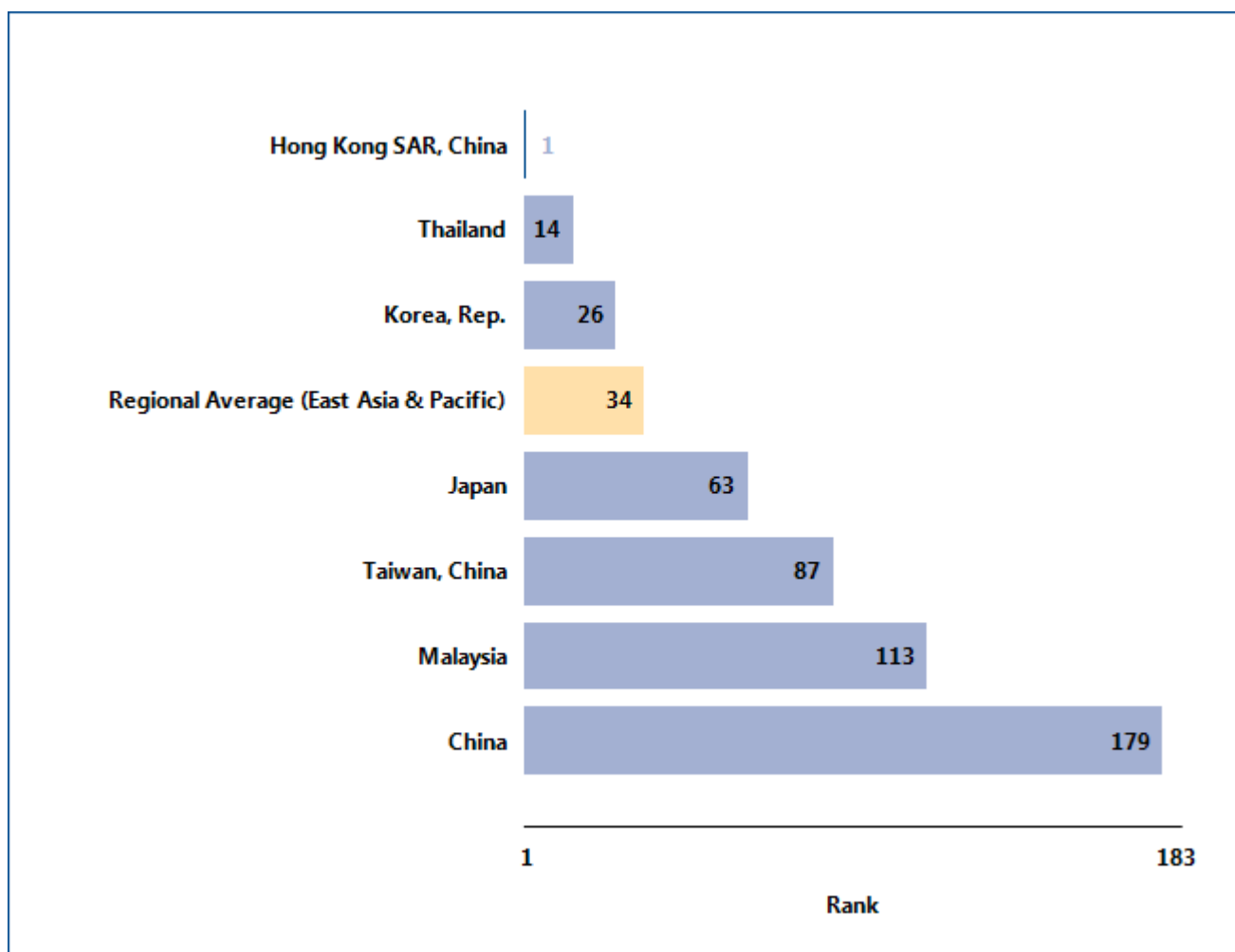
Source: *Doing Business* database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 1 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of dealing with construction permits (figure 3.2). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average

ranking provide other useful information for assessing how easy it is for an entrepreneur in Hong Kong SAR, China to legally build a warehouse.

Figure 3.2 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of dealing with construction permits



Source: Doing Business database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how easy (or difficult) it is to deal with construction permits in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data over time show

which aspects of the process have changed—and which have not (table 3.1). That can help identify where the potential for improvement is greatest.

Table 3.1 The ease of dealing with construction permits in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	1	1
Procedures (number)	21	21	21	14	6	6	6
Time (days)	177	177	177	137	67	67	67
Cost (% of income per capita)	24.6	23.4	21.1	18.7	18.7	19.4	17.8

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For more information on “no practice” marks, see the data notes for details.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

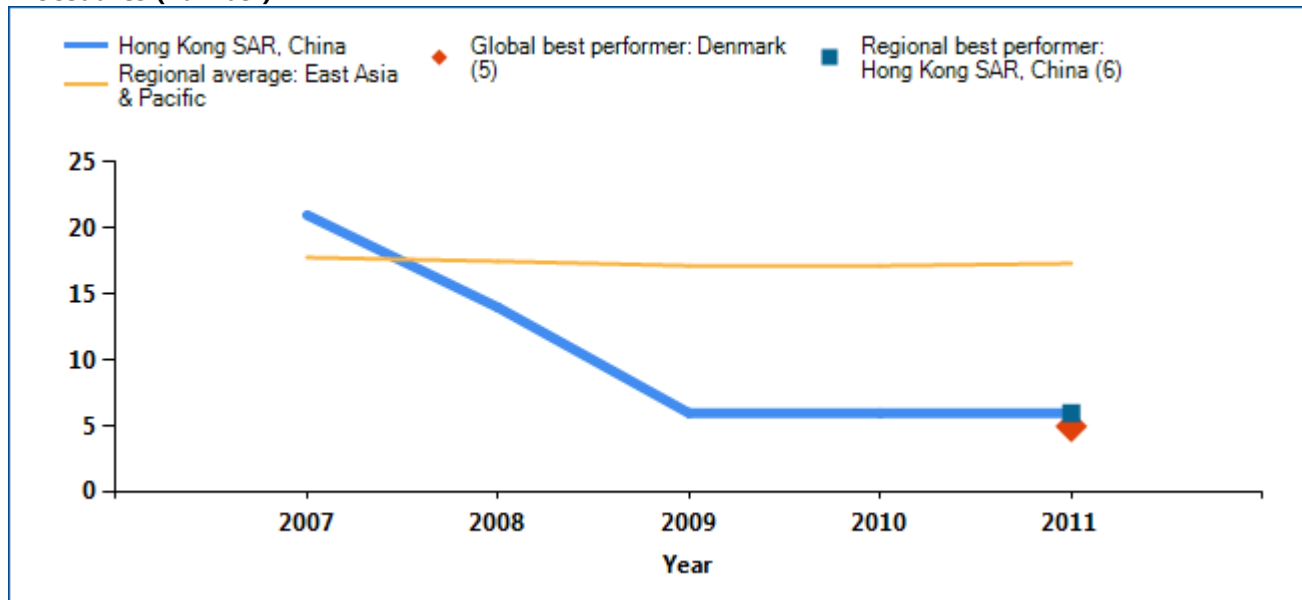
DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the procedures, time or cost required to deal with construction permits (figure 3.3). These economies may provide a model for Hong Kong

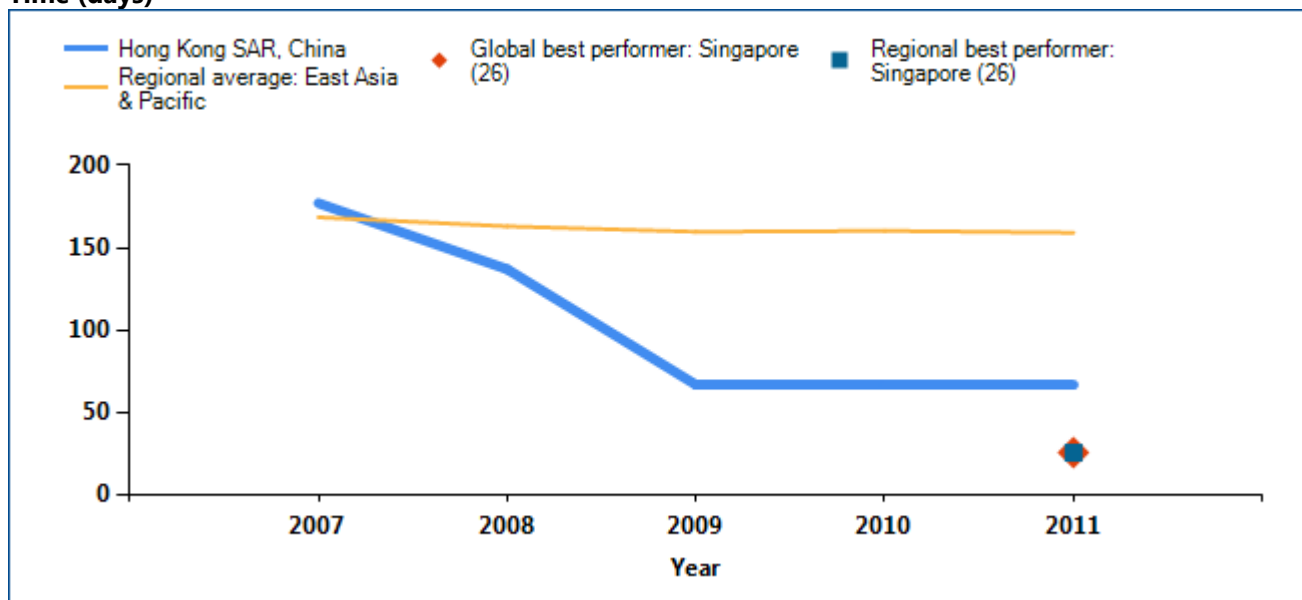
SAR, China on ways to improve the ease of dealing with construction permits. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

Figure 3.3 Has dealing with construction permits become easier over time?

Procedures (number)

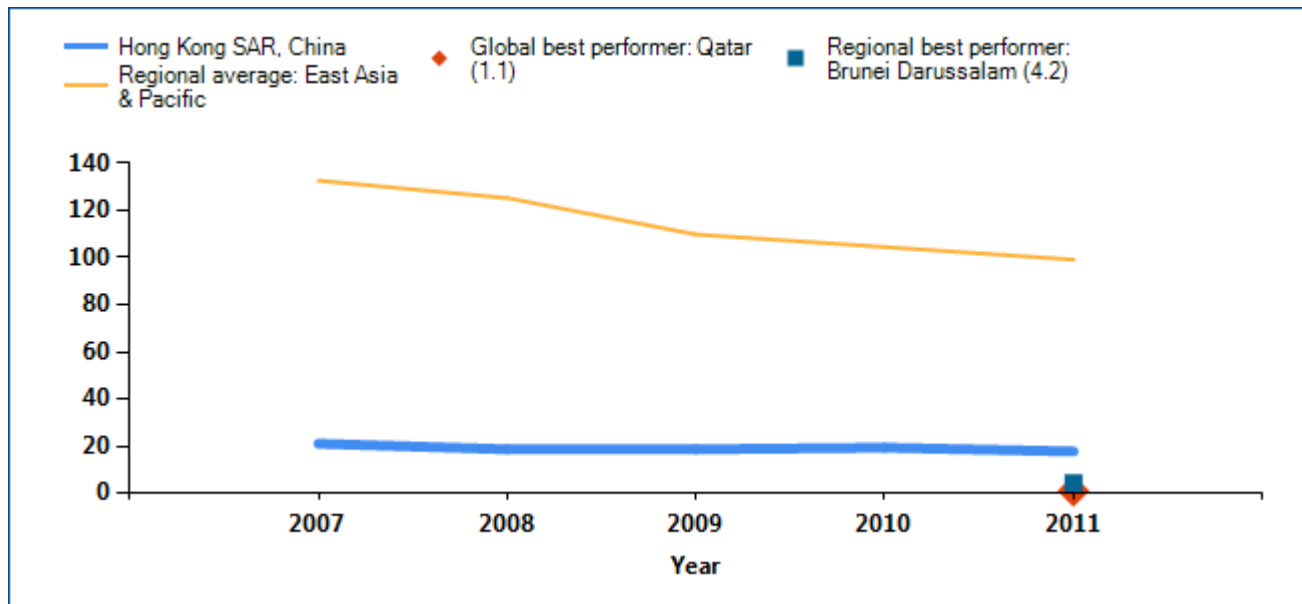


Time (days)



DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Cost (% of income per capita)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator. In cases where no data are displayed above for the economy, this indicates that the economy has received a “no practice” mark; see the data notes for details.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Smart regulation ensures that standards are met while making compliance easy and accessible to all. Coherent and transparent rules, efficient processes and adequate allocation of resources are especially important in sectors where safety is at stake. Construction is one of them. In an effort to ensure

building safety while keeping compliance costs reasonable, governments around the world have worked on consolidating permitting requirements. What construction permitting reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 3.2)?

Table 3.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made dealing with construction permits easier—or not?

By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	Under the “Be the Smart Regulator” program, a broad initiative to improve business licensing, the government reduced the time to deal with construction permits and eliminated several procedures related to inspections and preapprovals.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2006), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

What are the details?

The indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on a set of specific procedures—the steps that a company must complete to legally build a warehouse—identified by *Doing Business* through information collected from experts in construction licensing, including architects, construction lawyers, construction firms, utility service providers and public officials who deal with building regulations. These procedures are those that apply to a company and structure matching the standard assumptions used by *Doing Business* in collecting the data (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators cover).

BUILDING A WAREHOUSE

City : Hong Kong

Estimated Warehouse Value : HKD 8,881,500

The procedures, along with the associated time and cost, are summarized below.

Summary of procedures for dealing with construction permits in Hong Kong SAR, China — and the time and cost

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
1	<p>Obtain building plans approval</p> <p>BuildCo should submit the following documents for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building plans (Forms BA5, BD24). - General building plans. - Spread footing plans. - Hoarding plans. - Site formation plans. - Fire service installation plan (Form FSI/314). - Drainage plan <p>In December 2008 a One Stop Centre was established for Warehouse Construction Permits under the administration of the Efficiency Unit (EU) for receiving all relevant building license applications to 6 government departments and 2 private utilities (i.e. telephone line and electricity supply) and coordinating their joint inspections for two-storey warehouse projects.</p> <p>Property developers can use Form OSC-1 to submit to the One Stop Centre in one-go all applications relating to building plans approval and consent for commencement of building works from Buildings Department, technical audit of water supply connection works by Water Supplies Department, and road excavation permit from both the Police and Highways Department. This new arrangement can simplify the submission process by combining the following 6 procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain building plans approval HKD 30,240 - Apply and pay for technical audit of water supply connection works HKD 4,470 - Apply and pay for technical audit of drainage services HKD 4,340 - Apply, pay and receive road excavation work permission from 	45 days	HKD 40,974

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
	Highways Department HKD 1,924 - Notify and obtain approval from traffic police - Obtain building consent from Buildings Department Total cost: HKD 40,974		
2	Request and receive inspection of foundation strata At the approval stage for building foundation plans, the Buildings Department normally imposes some requirements and conditions for the construction of the foundation to ensure that the approved plans and the required standards are complied with. Upon the completion of the foundation, Form BA 14 and as-built foundation records must be submitted to notify the Buildings Department that the foundation work has been completed. The form must be approved by the Buildings Department before the next stage of construction can begin. The construction site is inspected within 7 days of the notification.	1 day	no charge
3	Notify Drainage Services Department of construction completion and receive transfer inspection and issuance of water supply certificate With the establishment of the One Stop Centre, the following 8 procedures as stated in the Report have been replaced by only 2 new procedures (i.e. (i) Submit notification of project completion and relevant applications to One Stop Centre and (ii) Receive joint and final inspection of relevant licensing authorities coordinated by One Stop Centre) – - Apply and pay for technical audit of Drainage Services Department - Notify Water Supplies Department of construction completion and receive transfer inspection and issuance of water supply certificate - Notify Drainage Services Department of construction completion and receive transfer inspection - Obtain certificate of completion of buildings works - Obtain certificate of compliance from Lands Department - Obtain fire certificate for fire service installation - Request electricity connection - Request telephone line The process to receive relevant final inspections can be also coordinated at this stage. Applicants should complete Part 2 of checklist OSC-2. The One Stop Centre will contact the relevant departments and the applicants for the arrangement of joint inspections.	21 days	HKD 3,440
4	* Notify Water Services Department of construction completion and receive transfer inspection See comments in Procedure 3.	1 day	no charge
5	* Request and obtain water connection	1 day	no charge
6	* Request and obtain telephone line	1 day	HKD 475

* Takes place simultaneously with another procedure.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING ELECTRICITY

Access to reliable and affordable electricity is vital for businesses. To counter weak electricity supply, many firms in developing economies have to rely on self-supply, often at a prohibitively high cost. Whether electricity is reliably available or not, the first step for a customer is always to gain access by obtaining a connection.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business records all procedures required for a local business to obtain a permanent electricity connection and supply for a standardized warehouse, as well as the time and cost to complete them. These procedures include applications and contracts with electricity utilities, clearances from other agencies and the external and final connection works. The ranking on the ease of getting electricity is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost. To make the data comparable across economies, several assumptions are used.

The warehouse:

- Is located in the economy's largest business city, in an area where other warehouses are located.
- Is not in a special economic zone where the connection would be eligible for subsidization or faster service.
- Has road access. The connection works involve the crossing of a road or roads but are carried out on public land.
- Is a new construction being connected to electricity for the first time.
- Has 2 stories, both above ground, with a total surface of about 1,300.6 square meters (14,000 square feet), and is built on a plot of 929 square meters (10,000 square feet).

The electricity connection:

- Is a 3-phase, 4-wire Y, 140-kilovolt-ampere (kVA) (subscribed capacity) connection.

WHAT THE GETTING ELECTRICITY INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to obtain an electricity connection (number)

Submitting all relevant documents and obtaining all necessary clearances and permits

Completing all required notifications and receiving all necessary inspections

Obtaining external installation works and possibly purchasing material for these works

Concluding any necessary supply contract and obtaining final supply

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

Is at least 1 calendar day

Each procedure starts on a separate day

Does not include time spent gathering information

Reflects the time spent in practice, with little follow-up and no prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of income per capita)

Official costs only, no bribes

Excludes value added tax

- Is 150 meters long.
- Is to either the low-voltage or the medium-voltage distribution network and either overhead or underground, whichever is more common in the economy and in the area where the warehouse is located. The length of any connection in the customer's private domain is negligible.
- Involves installing one electricity meter. The monthly electricity consumption will be 0.07 gigawatt-hour (GWh). The internal electrical wiring has been completed.

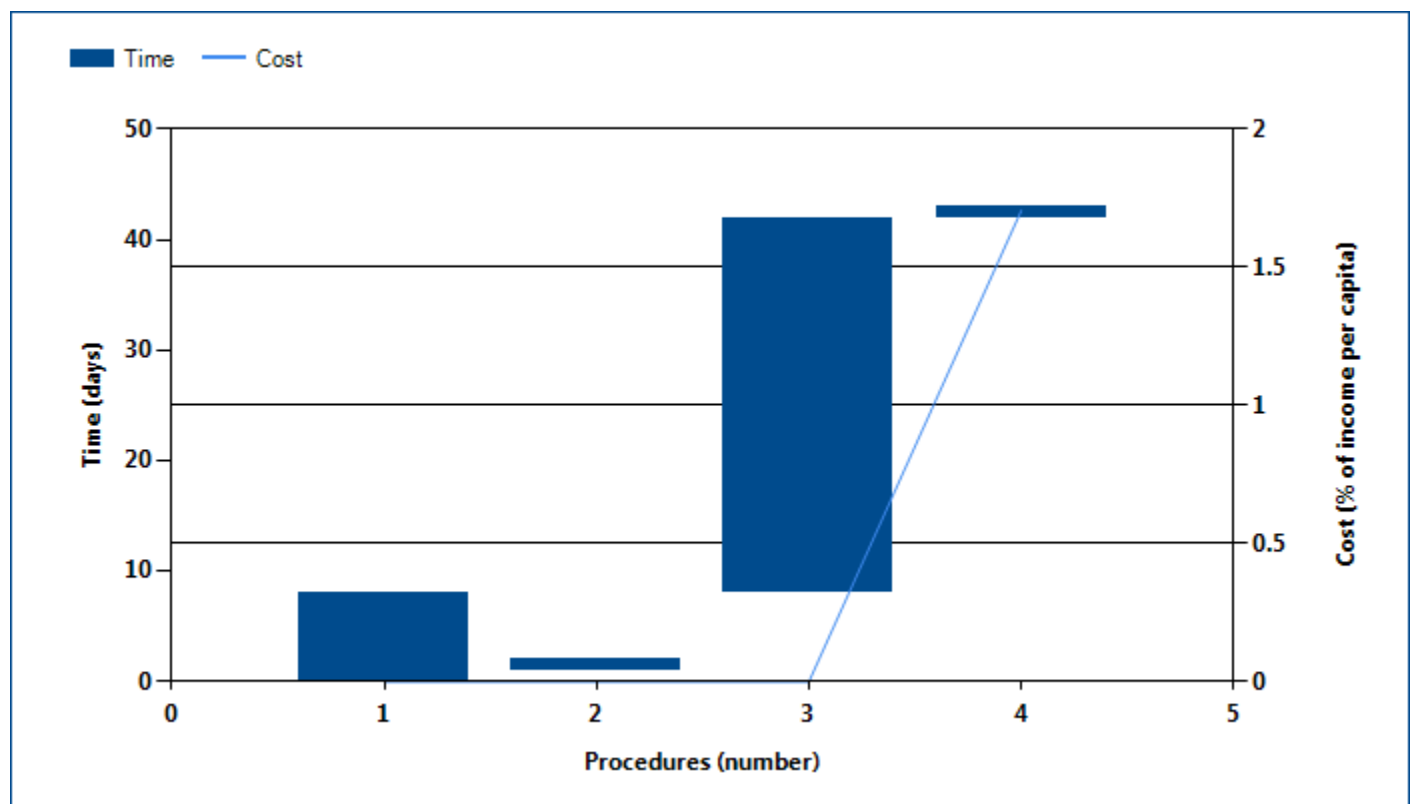
GETTING ELECTRICITY

Where does the economy stand today?

What does it take to obtain a new electricity connection in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, getting electricity

there requires 4 procedures, takes 43 days and costs 1.7% of income per capita (figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 What it takes to obtain an electricity connection in Hong Kong SAR, China



Note: For details on the procedures reflected here, see the summary at the end of this chapter.

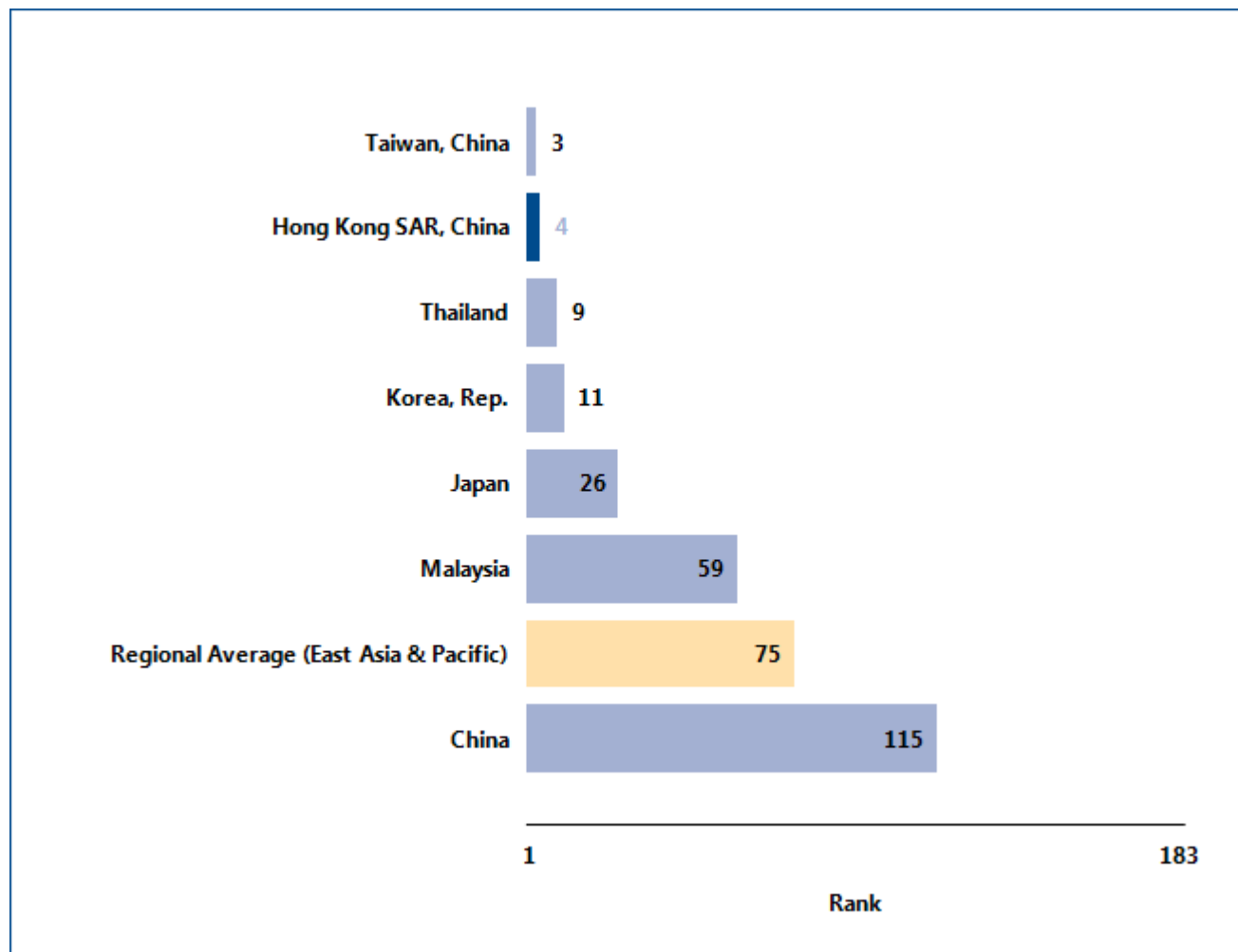
Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING ELECTRICITY

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 4 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of getting electricity (figure 4.2). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide

another perspective in assessing how easy it is for an entrepreneur in Hong Kong SAR, China to connect a warehouse to electricity.

Figure 4.2 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of getting electricity



Source: Doing Business database.

GETTING ELECTRICITY

Even more helpful than rankings for other economies may be the indicators underlying those rankings (table 4.1). If obtaining a new electricity connection requires fewer procedures, less time or less cost in other economies, the practices of their utilities may provide a

model for Hong Kong SAR, China on ways to improve the ease of getting electricity. Regional and global averages on these indicators may provide useful benchmarks.

Table 4.1 The ease of getting electricity in Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China	China	Japan	Korea, Rep.	Malaysia	Taiwan, China	Thailand	East Asia & Pacific average	Global average
Rank	4	115	26	11	59	3	9	75	..
Procedures (number)	4	5	3	4	6	4	4	5	5
Time (days)	43	145	117	49	51	23	35	88	111
Cost (% of income per capita)	1.7	640.9	0.0	38.6	95.5	52.4	77.6	1,079.4	1,942.3

Source: Doing Business database.

GETTING ELECTRICITY

What are the details?

The indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on a set of specific procedures—the steps that an entrepreneur must complete to get a warehouse connected to electricity by the local distribution utility—identified by *Doing Business*. Data are collected from the distribution utility, then completed and verified by electricity regulatory agencies and independent professionals such as electrical engineers, electrical contractors and construction companies. The electricity distribution utility surveyed is the one serving the area (or areas) in which warehouses are located. If there is a choice of distribution utilities, the one serving the largest number of customers is selected.

Summary of procedures for getting electricity in Hong Kong SAR, China—and the time and cost

OBTAINING AN ELECTRICITY CONNECTION

City:	Hong Kong
Name of Utility:	CLP Power Hong Kong Ltd.

The procedures are those that apply to a warehouse and electricity connection matching the standard assumptions used by *Doing Business* in collecting the data (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators cover). The procedures, along with the associated time and cost, are summarized below.

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
1	<p>The client submits application for electricity connection and awaits technical conditions from CLP Power Ltd.</p> <p>Internal wiring works before connection of supply should be carried out by a Registered Electrical Worker (REW) or a team of electricians led by a REW. When it comes to the stage that supply is connected (e.g. for testing or alteration after supply connection), the internal wiring works should be carried out by the REW.]</p> <p>The Registered Electrical Contractor (REC) and the REW should be registered with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) of the Hong Kong SAR Government (www.emsd.gov.hk). The clients requesting electricity supply need to complete a supply application form and provide a document for identity verification (Copy of identity or Business Registration Certificate).</p> <p>The application form can serve the purpose of a supply contract. If the client signs on the application form, it implies that they accept our supply conditions. The supply conditions are detailed in the "Supply Rule", which can be obtained in our Company website.</p> <p>The client can submit the application for electricity connection with CLP Power Ltd. online, in person, by mail, email, fax, or on the phone. https://www.clponline.com.hk/ClientService/OpenAccount/Pages/Default.aspx?lang=en</p> <p>The utility conducts an inspection of the site after receiving the application to study the specifics of the connection (possibility to</p>	8 calendar days	no charge

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
	connect directly to existing network or need for an expansion). After that, it formulates a supply project including network design and cable route selection after inspection. This is the Project Planning phase. The client does not have to await an estimate of connection fees.		
2	<p>* The client obtains external inspection from CLP Power Ltd.</p> <p>Site inspection is required for preparing the supply scheme. It is part of CLP Power's work in procedure 1, and interface with the client is not necessary for the inspection.</p>	1 calendar day	no charge
3	<p>The client receives external works from CLP Power Ltd.</p> <p>(a) Application for excavation permit</p> <p>An excavation permit is required for the excavation of cable trench in the public areas. The utility is required to apply to the relevant government departments for the permit. The time required depends on the responsiveness of government departments.</p> <p>The excavation permit will be applied for after the project planning stage. Since the permit will specify a limited work period, before applying for the permit, the utility will confirm with the client the target supply date and the target completion date of the work required by the client e.g. duct and draw pit. The excavation permit application cost is paid by the company and is not charged to clients as part of their cost for connection.</p> <p>Efforts were made to reduce the time to obtain an excavation permit. The efforts consisted of setting up a liaison group with representatives of four relevant government departments, viz. Highways Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Transport Department and Economic Analysis & Business Facilitation Unit, and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited to examine and rationalize the procedures related to applications for excavation permits in connection with supply of electricity for 2-storey warehouses or similar industrial buildings. As a result, the following performance pledges are publicized (http://www.gov.hk/en/theme/bf/smart/efficiency/excavation.htm) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways Department to complete initial assessment of an excavation proposal and approve an application for excavation permit within 1 working day respectively; • Transport Department to process a proposed temporary traffic arrangement within 21 days; and • Highways Department and Hong Kong Police Force to accept advance notification of electricity companies 2 working days before the commencement of excavation works. <p>These efforts were followed by another set of efforts to further reduce the time needed to obtain the permit: the government conducted a liaison group meeting with the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited to review the application process for excavation permits in connection with electricity supply for 2-storey warehouses in non-residential areas. As a</p>	34 calendar days	no charge

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
	<p>result, the Transport Department has further streamlined its procedures and reduced the time for processing temporary traffic arrangement proposals from 21 days to 14 days. The relevant Guidance Note for the Highways Department, Hong Kong Police Force and Transport Department has been revised accordingly: http://www.hyd.gov.hk/eng/public/publications/xppm/rd/doc/GN_Application%20for%20XP%20for%20Supply%20of%20electricity.pdf</p> <p>(b) Installation Work</p> <p>Processing time includes LV cable laying and jointing work on a trench (150m) with road crossing. (Construction phase)</p> <p>It excludes the advance notification for commencement of the works submitted to government departments after obtaining the excavation permit. This is also a time taken for manpower mobilization and material preparation. This is the Resource programming phase.</p>		
4	<p>The client obtains meter installation and final connection from CLP Power Ltd.</p> <p>The utility then inspects the internal wiring and installs the meter. The Registered Electrical Worker representing the client must be present. In fact, "according to the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations, Cap. 406E, any fixed electrical installation shall, after completion and before it is energized for use, be inspected, tested and certified with Work Completion Certificate (Form WR1) by a registered electrical worker and contractor. In case of any repair, alteration or addition to a fixed electrical installation, only the affected parts of the installation need to be inspected, tested and certified with Work Completion Certificate (Form WR1) by a registered electrical worker and contractor. A copy of the Work Completion Certificate (Form WR1) together with copies of Certificate of Registration of Electrical Contractor and Certificate of Registration of Electrical Worker should be forwarded to the Licensing Office as proof of compliance with the electricity safety requirements."</p> <p>The Registered Electrical Worker in charge of the internal installation and final inspection signs the WR1 form, and submits it to the utility at the appointment for electricity turn-on.</p> <p>The client requests a final inspection for meter installation from CLP Power through the installation inspection appointment system of the utility. The final inspection does not cover the entire internal wiring, but only the interface with the external circuit. The WR1 form is enough to guarantee the wiring has been done in accordance with the electricity regulations.</p> <p>The meter will be installed and supply connected after satisfactory inspection of the internal wiring (not entire inspection; only for the interface with external network). The service pledge is to install the meter within the same day of the satisfactory inspection of the internal wiring.</p>	1 calendar day	HKD 4,313.8

* Takes place simultaneously with another procedure.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

Ensuring formal property rights is fundamental. Effective administration of land is part of that. If formal property transfer is too costly or complicated, formal titles might go informal again. And where property is informal or poorly administered, it has little chance of being accepted as collateral for loans—limiting access to finance.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business records the full sequence of procedures necessary for a business to purchase property from another business and transfer the property title to the buyer's name. The transaction is considered complete when it is opposable to third parties and when the buyer can use the property, use it as collateral for a bank loan or resell it. The ranking on the ease of registering property is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost.

To make the data comparable across economies, several assumptions about the parties to the transaction, the property and the procedures are used.

The parties (buyer and seller):

- Are limited liability companies, 100% domestically and privately owned.
- Are located in the periurban area of the economy's largest business city.
- Have 50 employees each, all of whom are nationals.
- Perform general commercial activities.

The property (fully owned by the seller):

- Has a value of 50 times income per capita. The sale price equals the value.
- Is registered in the land registry or cadastre, or both, and is free of title disputes.
- Is located in a periurban commercial zone, and no rezoning is required.

WHAT THE REGISTERING PROPERTY INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to legally transfer title on immovable property (number)

Preregistration (for example, checking for liens, notarizing sales agreement, paying property transfer taxes)

Registration in the economy's largest business city

Postregistration (for example, filing title with the municipality)

Time required to complete each procedure (calendar days)

Does not include time spent gathering information

Each procedure starts on a separate day

Procedure completed once final document is received

No prior contact with officials

Cost required to complete each procedure (% of property value)

Official costs only, no bribes

No value added or capital gains taxes included

- Has no mortgages attached and has been under the same ownership for the past 10 years.
- Consists of 557.4 square meters (6,000 square feet) of land and a 10-year-old, 2-story warehouse of 929 square meters (10,000 square feet). The warehouse is in good condition and complies with all safety standards, building codes and legal requirements. The property will be transferred in its entirety.

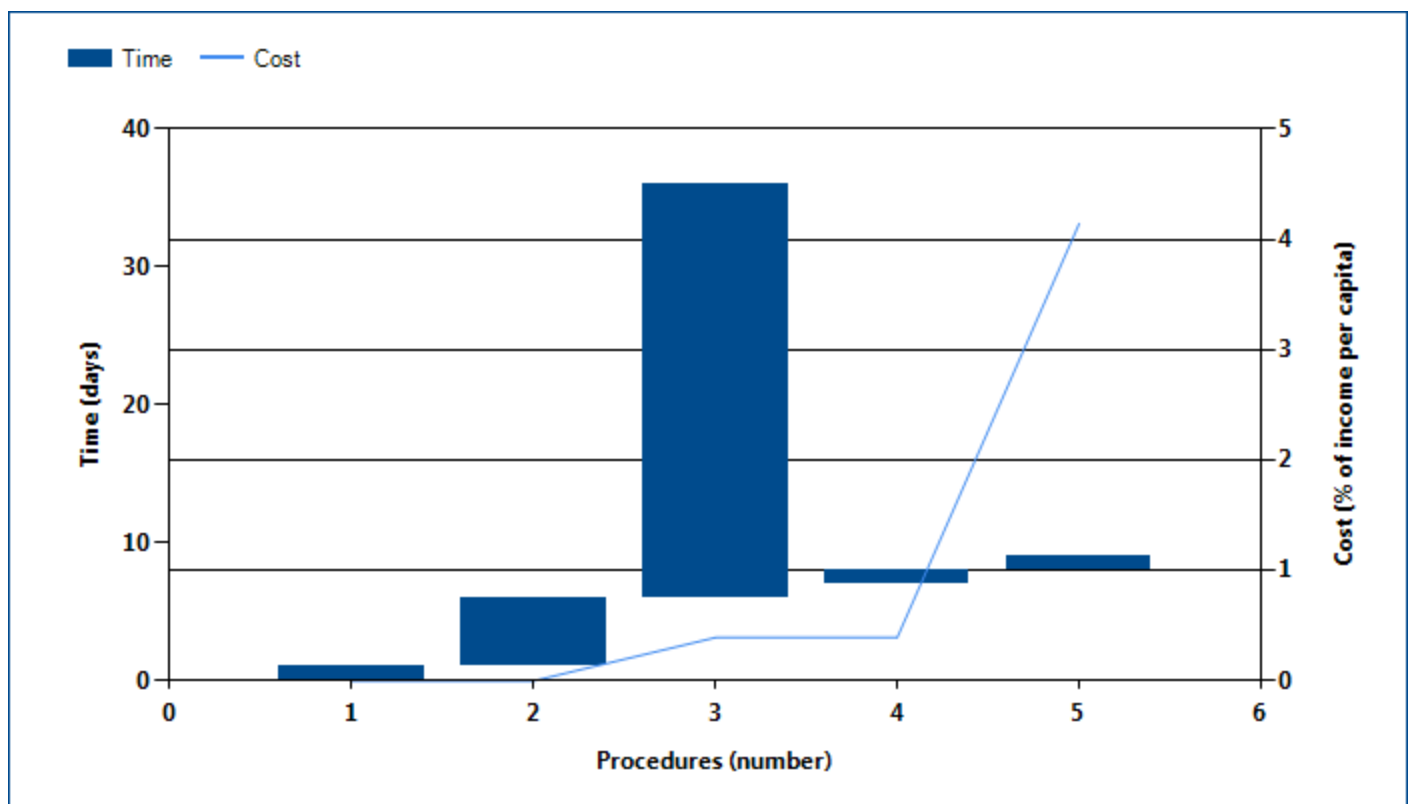
REGISTERING PROPERTY

Where does the economy stand today?

What does it take to complete a property transfer in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, registering property there requires

5 procedures, takes 36 days and costs 4.1% of the property value (figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 What it takes to register property in Hong Kong SAR, China



Note: For details on the procedures reflected here, see the summary at the end of this chapter.

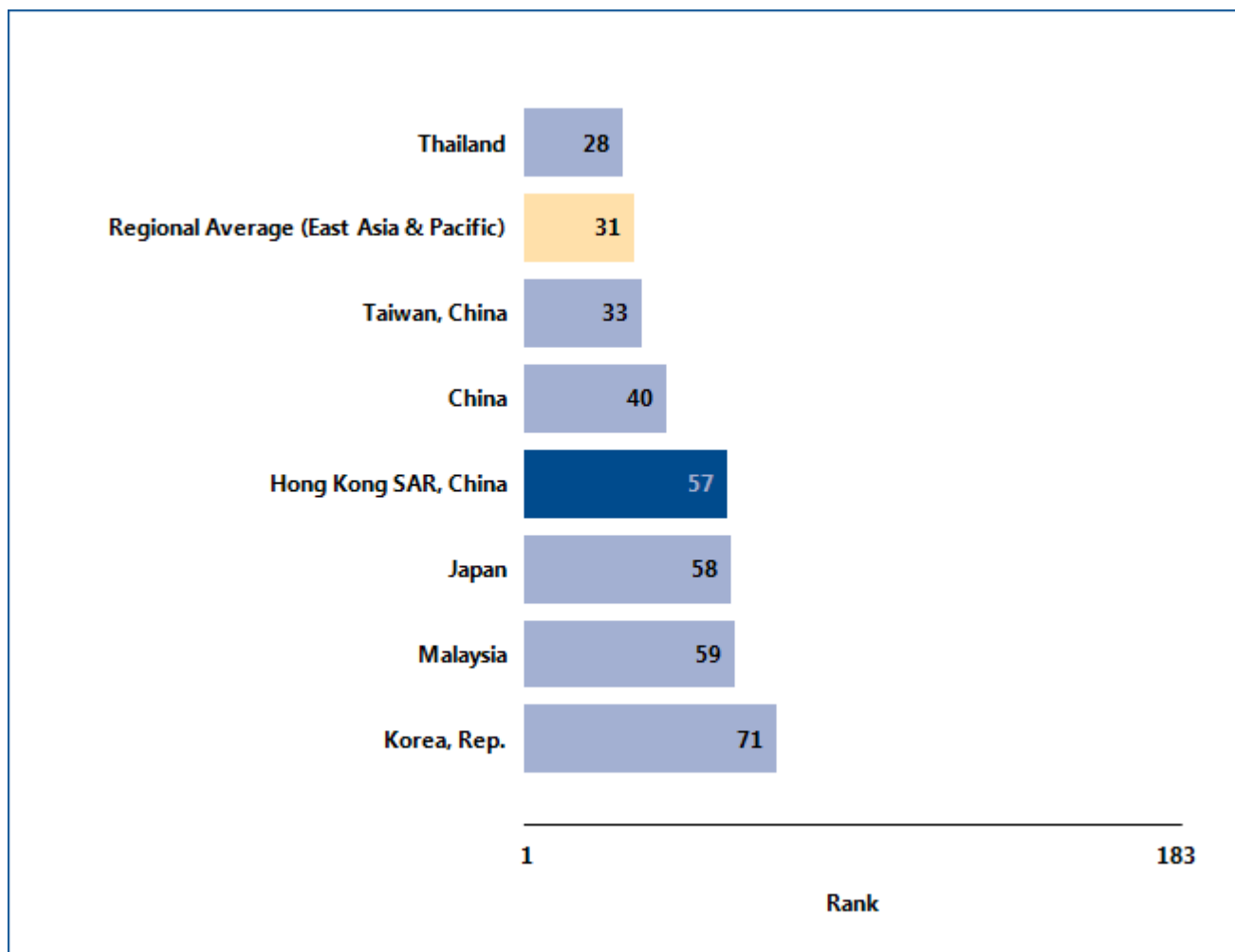
Source: *Doing Business* database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 57 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of registering property (figure 5.2). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide

other useful information for assessing how easy it is for an entrepreneur in Hong Kong SAR, China to transfer property.

Figure 5.2 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of registering property



Source: Doing Business database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how easy (or difficult) it is to register property in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data over time show which

aspects of the process have changed—and which have not (table 5.1). That can help identify where the potential for improvement is greatest.

Table 5.1 The ease of registering property in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2005	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	..	55	57
Procedures (number)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Time (days)	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
Cost (% of property value)	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For more information on “no practice” marks, see the data notes for details.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

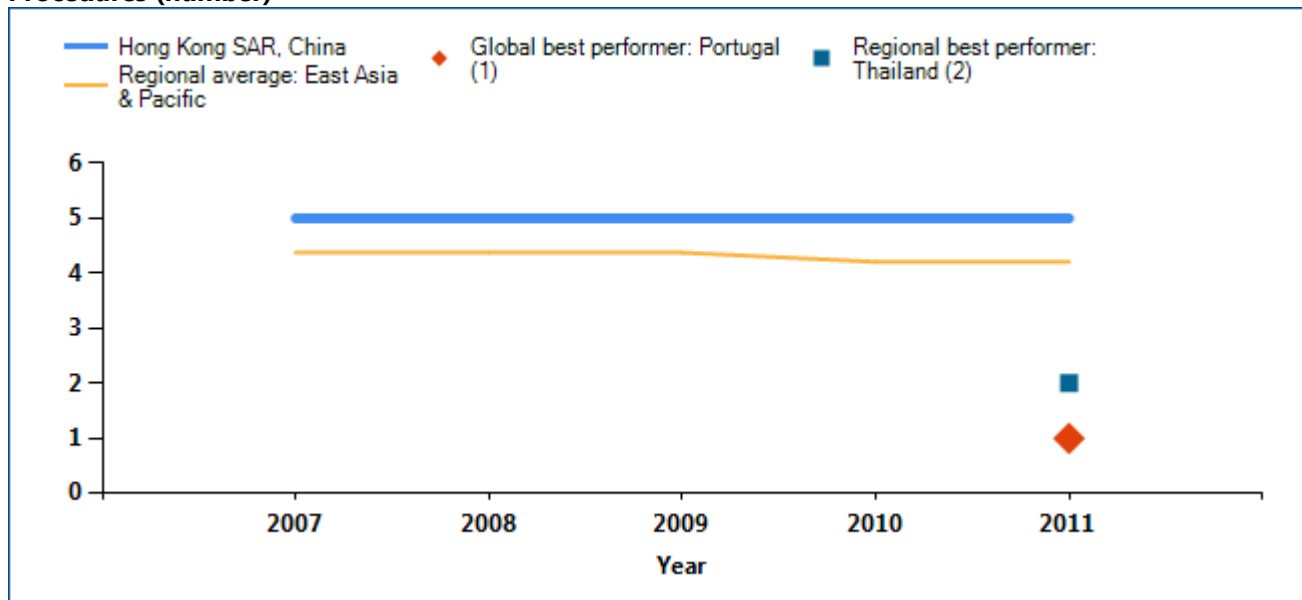
REGISTERING PROPERTY

Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the procedures, time or cost required to complete a property transfer (figure 5.3). These economies may provide a model for Hong Kong

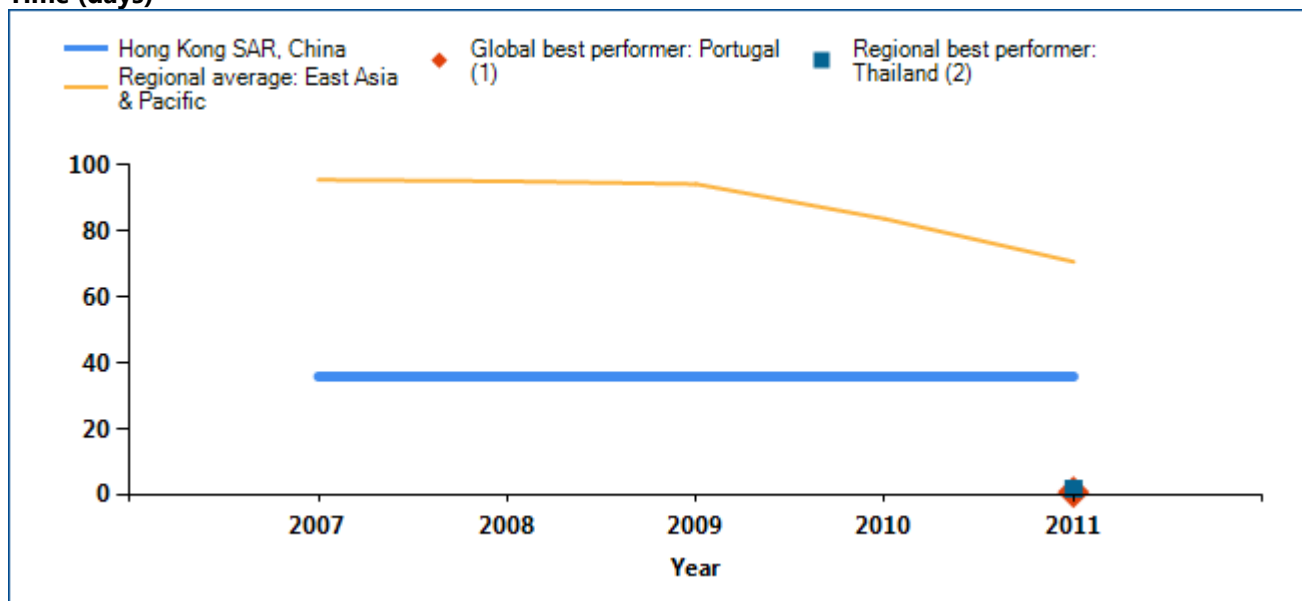
SAR, China on ways to improve the ease of registering property. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

Figure 5.3 Has registering property become easier over time?

Procedures (number)

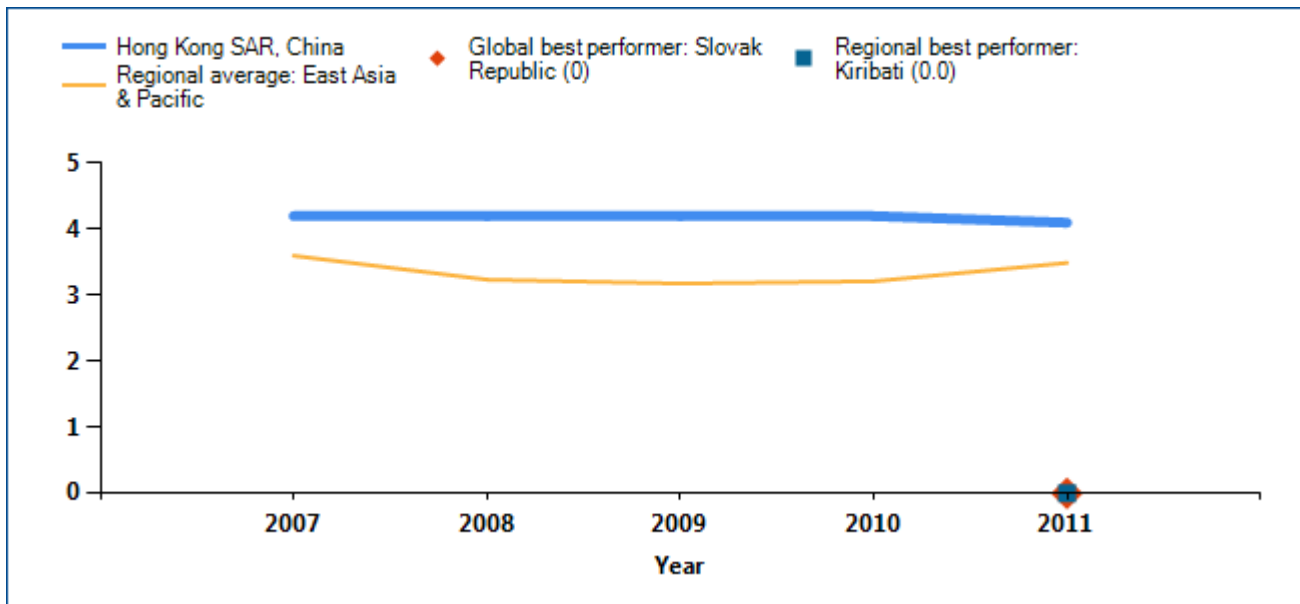


Time (days)



REGISTERING PROPERTY

Cost (% of property value)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator. In cases where no data are displayed above for the economy, this indicates that the economy has received a “no practice” mark; see the data notes for details.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

Economies worldwide have been making it easier for entrepreneurs to register and transfer property—such as by computerizing land registries, introducing time limits for procedures and setting low fixed fees. Many

have cut the time required substantially—enabling buyers to use or mortgage their property earlier. What property registration reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 5.2)?

Table 5.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made registering property easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	Property registration has also become easier, because the stamp duty for the sale act can now be submitted online.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

REGISTERING PROPERTY

What are the details?

The indicators reported here are based on a set of specific procedures—the steps that a buyer and seller must complete to transfer the property to the buyer's name—identified by *Doing Business* through information collected from local property lawyers, notaries and property registries. These procedures are those that apply to a transaction matching the standard assumptions used by *Doing Business* in collecting the data (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators cover).

STANDARD PROPERTY TRANSFER

City: Hong Kong
Property Value: 12,642,789.9

The procedures, along with the associated time and cost, are summarized below.

Summary of procedures for registering property in Hong Kong SAR, China—and the time and cost

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
1	<p>Purchaser's solicitor does a land search at the Land Registry</p> <p>It is a common procedure that the Buyer's solicitor will conduct a land search before execution of the Agreement for Sale and Purchase (ASP) to ensure that the previous registration title of the property is complete and that no unusual encumbrance is registered against the property. All land records are available for search by the public at the Land Registry or by doing an online search. The prescribed fee is HK\$25 for a full land search (which would provide all historical and current data affecting the property) and HK\$10 for an up-date land search (which would only provide the current data). This will take about one (1) day and in fact, immediately if it is done through the online internet service provided by the Land Registry which many law firms in Hong Kong would have subscribed to such service.</p>	1 day	HKD 25
2	<p>Preparation of (i) Sale and Purchase Agreement and (ii) Assignment</p> <p>Depending on encumbrances that might be still associated with the property this process might take a longer time. Note: The Property Assignment will give the purchaser legal title and possession of the property.</p> <p>SCALE OF COSTS Consideration not Exceeding (HKD) Charge (HKD) % of Consideration HKD 18,125 + 0.125% of value exceeding HKD 5,000,000 HKD 74,375 + 0.075% of value exceeding HKD 50,000,000</p> <p>With reference to the above scale of costs, the solicitor fee for the subject warehouse property of the business case (valued at HKD 12,117,428) is around HKD 47,800 (i.e. HKD 30,000 for the first HKD5,000,000 plus HKD 17,800 for the remaining HKD 7,117,428 (at a</p>	5 days	HKD 450 (Assignment registration fee) + HKD 30,000 + 0.25% of value exceeding HKD 5,000,000 (solicitor's fee according to Solicitors -General-Costs Rules (Cap. 159G) which is negotiable).

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
	rate of HKD25 per HKD 10,000)) or 0.4% of the property value.		
3	<p>* Execution of Sale and Purchase Agreement and filing at the Land Registry</p> <p>The Purchaser's solicitor registers the executed Agreement for Sale and Purchase (ASP) with the Land Registry. At this time, the Purchaser usually gives a 10% down payment on the property and has time to arrange financing for the remainder owed. During the 30-day period, the Purchaser's solicitor prepares an Assignment deed. In addition, during this period of time, the Buyer's solicitor will complete perusal of title deeds and clarify any title issues with the Seller's solicitors and confirm good title to the Buyer (through a final land search on the property to ensure there has not been any competing deed lodged with the Land Registry after the executed Agreement for Sale and Purchase has been registered with the Land Registry).</p>	30 days	HKD 210
4	<p>* The Purchaser's solicitor settles the stamp duty payable with the Stamp Office via e-stamping</p> <p>All necessary forms and documents for stamping can be submitted online (www.gov.hk/estamping.) or in paper. The process of submission and payment is straight forward, details of the transaction are submitted over the internet, a stamp invoice is issued immediately which can be printed. After the online payment of stamp duty, solicitors can print the stamp certificates and attach them to the instruments as evidence of stamping. Payment of the stamp duty can be done using different methods, (PPS, MasterCard, and Visa). The current payment limits for credit cards are HK\$5,000. If the duty amount exceeds the payment limits, payment can be made offline by printing a payment notice for settlement by telephone, bank ATM, internet or in person at the Stamp Office or Post Offices. After payment of stamp duty, a stamp certificate will be issued instantly and available for printing. Each stamp certificate will have its own "Stamp Certificate Number".</p> <p>For online payments and e-stamping, it is not required to present the original instruments to the Stamp Office. Details of the e-Stamping service in Hong Kong are available at www.ird.gov.hk/eng/tax/e_stamp.htm.</p> <p>Both methods fulfill the stamping requirement equally. Under the conventional method no stamp certificate is issued, instead, the relevant document (e.g. the assignment) would be stamped by the Stamp Office with the value of stamp duty paid.</p>	1 day	3.75% stamp duty for non-residential property
5	<p>* Purchaser's solicitor registers the Property Assignment at the Land Registry</p> <p>The duly stamped Assignment will then be presented by the solicitors to the Land Registry. The purchaser's solicitor shall register the Assignment at the Land Registry within 30 days from the date of Assignment so as to preserve its priority under the law. After receipt of the original</p>	1 day	included in previous procedure

No.	Procedure	Time to complete	Cost to complete
	Assignment by the Land Registry, it will take another 30 days depending on the workload of the Land Registry at that time to complete the registration and return the Assignment to the solicitor's office. However, the title is legally property of the purchaser once the Property Assignment is submitted to the Land Registry on the first day. The remaining days (or months) account for the Registry to document the transfer in microfilm and other media.		

* Takes place simultaneously with another procedure.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING CREDIT

Two types of frameworks can facilitate access to credit and improve its allocation: credit information systems and the legal rights of borrowers and lenders in collateral and bankruptcy laws. Credit information systems enable lenders to view a potential borrower's financial history (positive or negative)—valuable information to consider when assessing risk. And they permit borrowers to establish a good credit history that will allow easier access to credit. Sound collateral laws enable businesses to use their assets, especially movable property, as security to generate capital—while strong creditors' rights have been associated with higher ratios of private sector credit to GDP.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business assesses the sharing of credit information and the legal rights of borrowers and lenders with respect to secured transactions through 2 sets of indicators. The depth of credit information index measures rules and practices affecting the coverage, scope and accessibility of credit information available through a public credit registry or a private credit bureau. The strength of legal rights index measures the degree to which collateral and bankruptcy laws protect the rights of borrowers and lenders and thus facilitate lending. *Doing Business* uses case scenarios to determine the scope of the secured transactions system, involving a secured borrower and a secured lender and examining legal restrictions on the use of movable collateral. These scenarios assume that the borrower:

- Is a private, limited liability company.
- Has its headquarters and only base of operations in the largest business city.

WHAT THE GETTING CREDIT INDICATORS MEASURE

Strength of legal rights index (0–10)

Protection of rights of borrowers and lenders through collateral laws

Protection of secured creditors' rights through bankruptcy laws

Depth of credit information index (0–6)

Scope and accessibility of credit information distributed by public credit registries and private credit bureaus

Public credit registry coverage (% of adults)

Number of individuals and firms listed in public credit registry as percentage of adult population

Private credit bureau coverage (% of adults)

Number of individuals and firms listed in largest private credit bureau as percentage of adult population

- Has 100 employees.
- Is 100% domestically owned, as is the lender.

The ranking on the ease of getting credit is based on the percentile rankings on its component indicators: the depth of credit information index (weighted at 37.5%) and the strength of legal rights index (weighted at 62.5%).

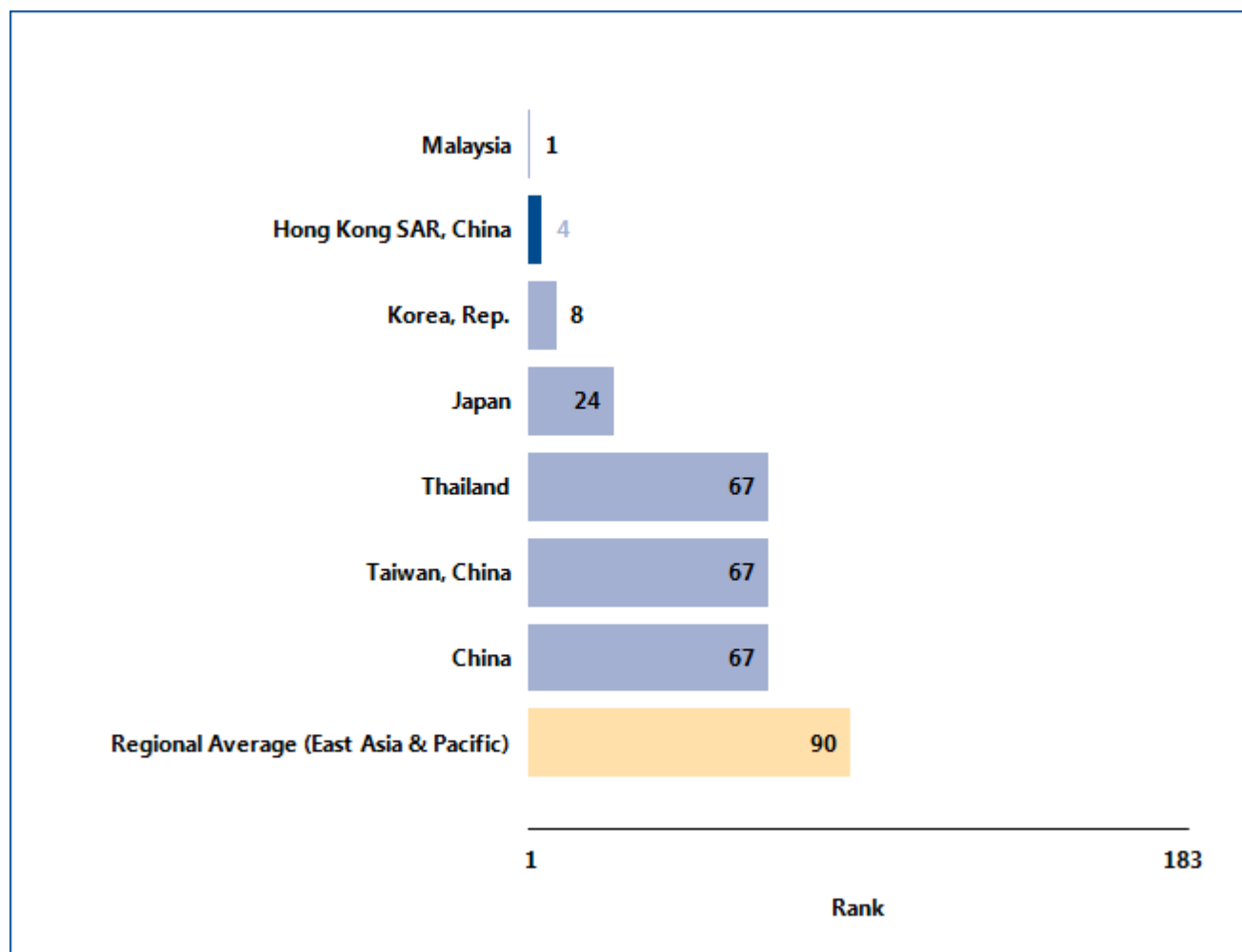
GETTING CREDIT

Where does the economy stand today?

How well do the credit information system and collateral and bankruptcy laws in Hong Kong SAR, China facilitate access to credit? The economy has a score of 5 on the depth of credit information index and a score of 10 on the strength of legal rights index (see the summary of scoring at the end of this chapter for details). Higher scores indicate more credit information and stronger legal rights for borrowers and lenders.

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 4 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of getting credit (figure 6.1). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide other useful information for assessing how well regulations and institutions in Hong Kong SAR, China support lending and borrowing.

Figure 6.1 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of getting credit



Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING CREDIT

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how well the credit information system and collateral and bankruptcy laws in Hong Kong SAR, China support lending and borrowing today, data over time can help

show where institutions and regulations have been strengthened—and where they have not (table 6.1). That can help identify where the potential for improvement is greatest.

Table 6.1 The ease of getting credit in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2005	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	4
Strength of legal rights index (0-10)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Depth of credit information index (0-6)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Public registry coverage (% of adults)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Private bureau coverage (% of adults)	61.5	64.5	64.5	64.7	69.9	71.9	72.0	86.3

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

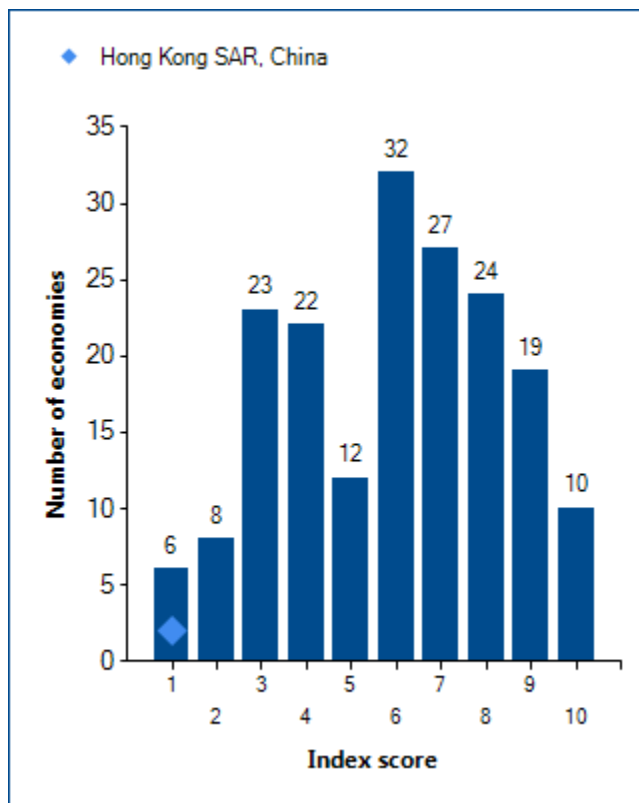
GETTING CREDIT

One way to put an economy's getting credit indicators into context is to see where the economy stands in the distribution of scores across other economies. Figure 6.2 highlights the score on the strength of legal rights

index for Hong Kong SAR, China in 2011 and shows the number of other economies having the same score in 2011. Figure 6.3 shows the same thing for the depth of credit information index.

Figure 6.2 Have legal rights for borrowers and lenders become stronger?

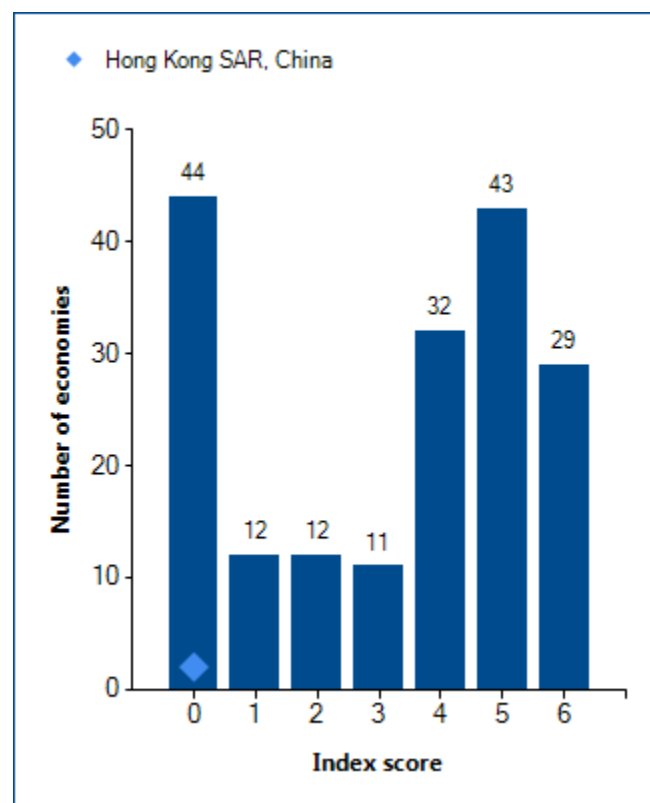
Number of economies with each score on strength of legal rights index (0–10), 2011



Source: Doing Business database.

Figure 6.3 Have the coverage and accessibility of credit information grown?

Number of economies with each score on depth of credit information index (0–6), 2011



Source: Doing Business database.

GETTING CREDIT

When economies strengthen the legal rights of lenders and borrowers under collateral and bankruptcy laws, and increase the scope, coverage and accessibility of credit information, they can increase entrepreneurs'

access to credit. What credit reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 6.2)?

Table 6.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made getting credit easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

GETTING CREDIT

What are the details?

The getting credit indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on detailed information collected in that economy. The data on credit information sharing are collected through a survey of a public credit registry or private credit bureau (if one exists). To construct the depth of credit information index, a score of 1 is assigned for each of 6 features of the public credit registry or private credit bureau (see summary of scoring below).

The data on the legal rights of borrowers and lenders are gathered through a survey of financial lawyers and verified through analysis of laws and regulations as well as public sources of information on collateral and bankruptcy laws. For the strength of legal rights index, a score of 1 is assigned for each of 8 aspects related to legal rights in collateral law and 2 aspects in bankruptcy law.

Summary of scoring for the getting credit indicators in Hong Kong SAR, China

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China	East Asia & Pacific	OECD high income
Strength of legal rights index (0-10)	10	7	7
Depth of credit information index (0-6)	5	2	5
Public registry coverage (% of adults)	0.0	10.3	9.5
Private bureau coverage (% of adults)	86.3	18.1	63.9

Strength of legal rights index (0–10)	Index score: 10
Can any business use movable assets as collateral while keeping possession of the assets; and any financial institution accept such assets as collateral ?	Yes
Does the law allow businesses to grant a non possessory security right in a single category of movable assets, without requiring a specific description of collateral?	Yes
Does the law allow businesses to grant a non possessory security right in substantially all of its assets, without requiring a specific description of collateral?	Yes
May a security right extend to future or after-acquired assets, and may it extend automatically to the products, proceeds or replacements of the original assets ?	Yes
Is a general description of debts and obligations permitted in collateral agreements; can all types of debts and obligations be secured between parties; and can the collateral agreement include a maximum amount for which the assets are encumbered?	Yes
Is a collateral registry in operation, that is unified geographically and by asset type, with an electronic database indexed by debtor's names?	Yes
Are secured creditors paid first (i.e. before general tax claims and employee claims) when a debtor defaults outside an insolvency procedure?	Yes

Strength of legal rights index (0–10)	Index score: 10
Are secured creditors paid first (i.e. before general tax claims and employee claims) when a business is liquidated?	Yes
Are secured creditors either not subject to an automatic stay or moratorium on enforcement procedures when a debtor enters a court-supervised reorganization procedure, or the law provides secured creditors with grounds for relief from an automatic stay or	Yes
Does the law allow parties to agree in a collateral agreement that the lender may enforce its security right out of court, at the time a security interest is created?	Yes

Depth of credit information index (0–6)	Private credit bureau	Public credit registry	Index score: 5
Are data on both firms and individuals distributed?	Yes	No	1
Are both positive and negative data distributed?	Yes	No	1
Does the registry distribute credit information from retailers, trade creditors or utility companies as well as financial institutions?	No	No	0
Are more than 2 years of historical credit information distributed?	Yes	No	1
Is data on all loans below 1% of income per capita distributed?	Yes	No	1
Is it guaranteed by law that borrowers can inspect their data in the largest credit registry?	Yes	No	1

Note: An economy receives a score of 1 if there is a "yes" to either private bureau or public registry.

Coverage	Private credit bureau	Public credit registry
Number of firms	120,404	0
Number of individuals	4,474,805	0

Source: Doing Business database.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

Investor protections matter for the ability of companies to raise the capital they need to grow, innovate, diversify and compete. If the laws do not provide such protections, investors may be reluctant to invest unless they become the controlling shareholders. Strong regulations clearly define related-party transactions, promote clear and efficient disclosure requirements, require shareholder participation in major decisions of the company and set clear standards of accountability for company insiders.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the strength of minority shareholder protections against directors' use of corporate assets for personal gain—or self-dealing. The indicators distinguish 3 dimensions of investor protections: transparency of related-party transactions (extent of disclosure index), liability for self-dealing (extent of director liability index) and shareholders' ability to sue officers and directors for misconduct (ease of shareholder suits index). The ranking on the strength of investor protection index is the simple average of the percentile rankings on these 3 indices. To make the data comparable across economies, a case study uses several assumptions about the business and the transaction.

The business (Buyer):

- Is a publicly traded corporation listed on the economy's most important stock exchange (or at least a large private company with multiple shareholders).
- Has a board of directors and a chief executive officer (CEO) who may legally act on behalf of Buyer where permitted, even if this is not specifically required by law.

The transaction involves the following details:

- Mr. James, a director and the majority shareholder of the company, proposes that

WHAT THE PROTECTING INVESTORS INDICATORS MEASURE

Extent of disclosure index (0–10)

- Who can approve related-party transactions
- Disclosure requirements in case of related-party transactions

Extent of director liability index (0–10)

- Ability of shareholders to hold interested parties and members of the approving body liable in case of related-party transactions
- Available legal remedies (damages, repayment of profits, fines, imprisonment and rescission of the transaction)
- Ability of shareholders to sue directly or derivatively

Ease of shareholder suits index (0–10)

- Access to internal corporate documents (directly or through a government inspector)
- Documents and information available during trial

Strength of investor protection index (0–10)

- Simple average of the extent of disclosure, extent of director liability and ease of shareholder suits indices

the company purchase used trucks from another company he owns.

- The price is higher than the going price for used trucks, but the transaction goes forward.
- All required approvals are obtained, and all required disclosures made, though the transaction is prejudicial to Buyer.
- Shareholders sue the interested parties and the members of the board of directors.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

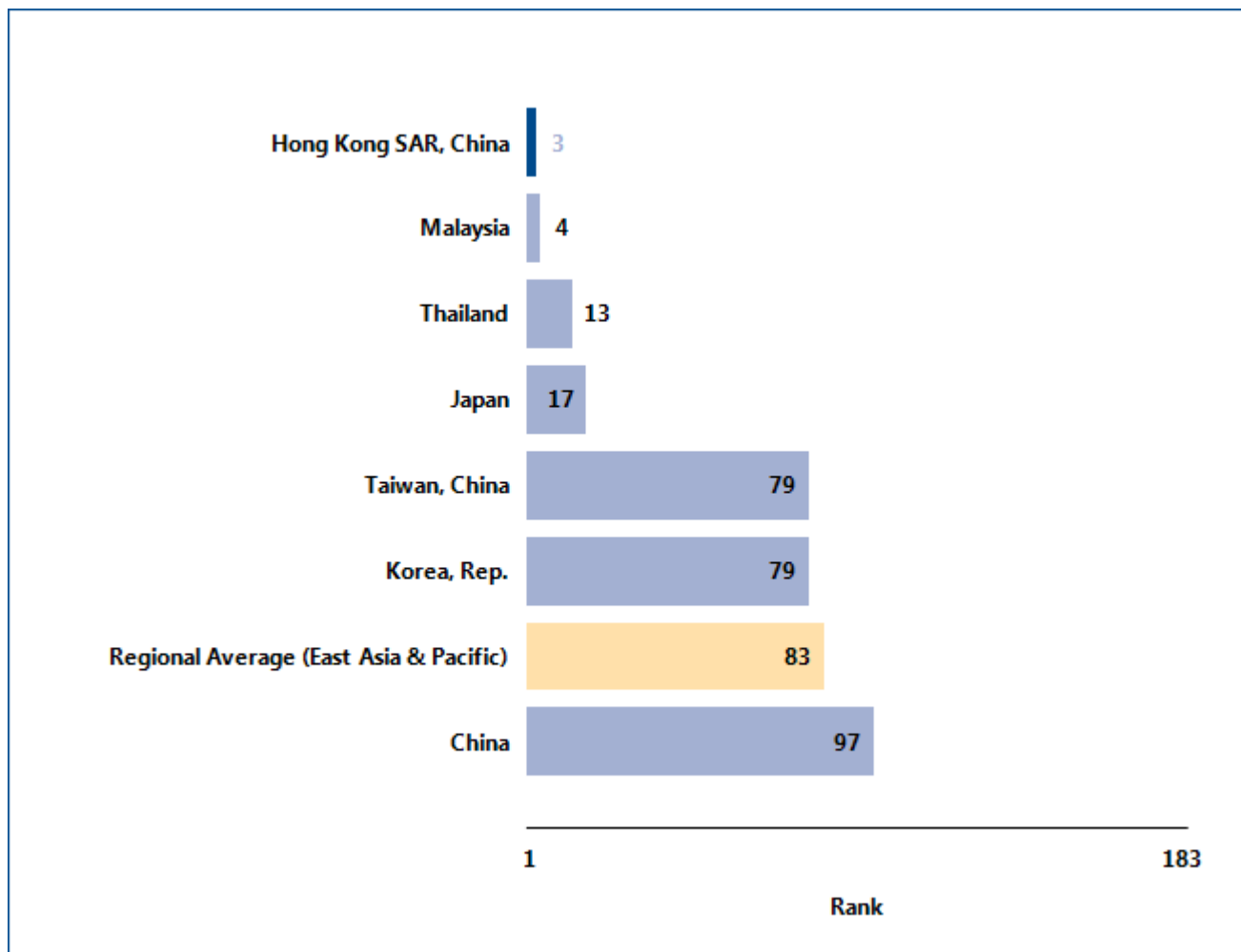
Where does the economy stand today?

How strong are investor protections in Hong Kong SAR, China? The economy has a score of 9.0 on the strength of investor protection index, with a higher score indicating stronger protections (see the summary of scoring at the end of this chapter for details).

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 3 in the ranking of 183 economies on the strength of investor

protection index (figure 7.1). While the indicator does not measure all aspects related to the protection of minority investors, a higher ranking does indicate that an economy's regulations offer stronger investor protections against self-dealing in the areas measured.

Figure 7.1 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the strength of investor protection index



Source: Doing Business database.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how well regulations in Hong Kong SAR, China protect minority investors today, data over time show whether the protections have been strengthened (table 7.1).

And the global ranking on the strength of investor protection index over time shows whether the economy is slipping behind other economies in investor protections—or surpassing them.

Table 7.1 The strength of investor protections in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	3	3
Extent of disclosure index (0-10)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Extent of director liability index (0-10)	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)	8	9	9	9	9	9	9
Strength of investor protection index (0-10)	8.7	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

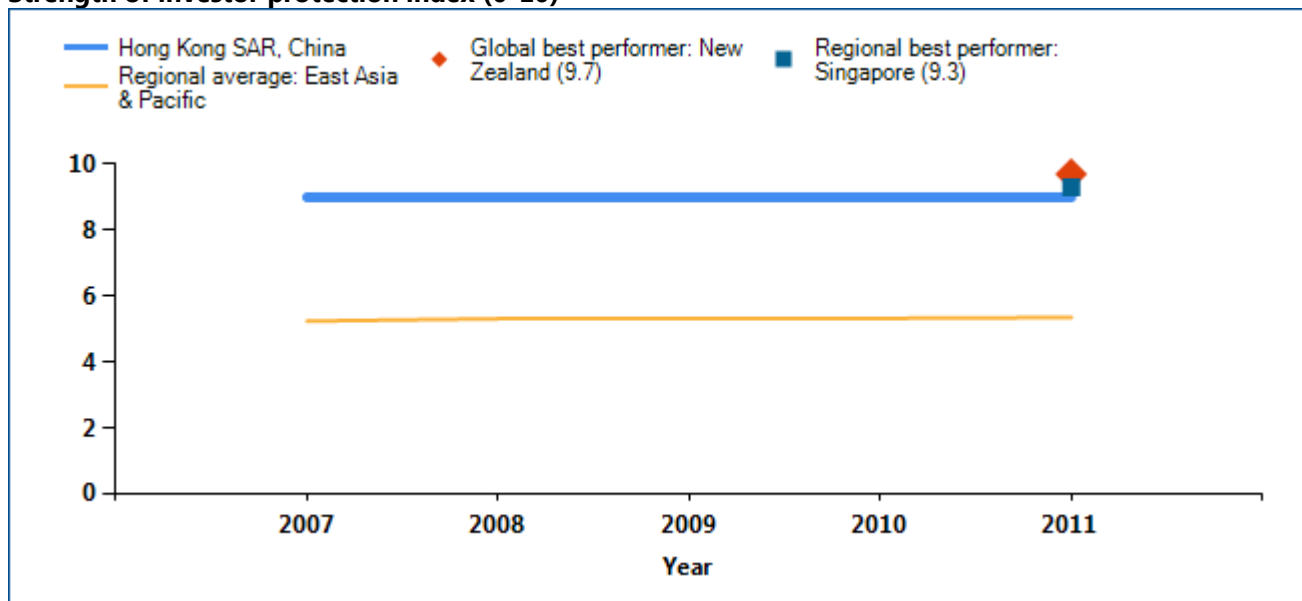
PROTECTING INVESTORS

But the overall ranking on the strength of investor protection index tells only part of the story. Economies may offer strong protections in some areas but not others. So the scores recorded over time for Hong Kong SAR, China on the extent of disclosure, extent of

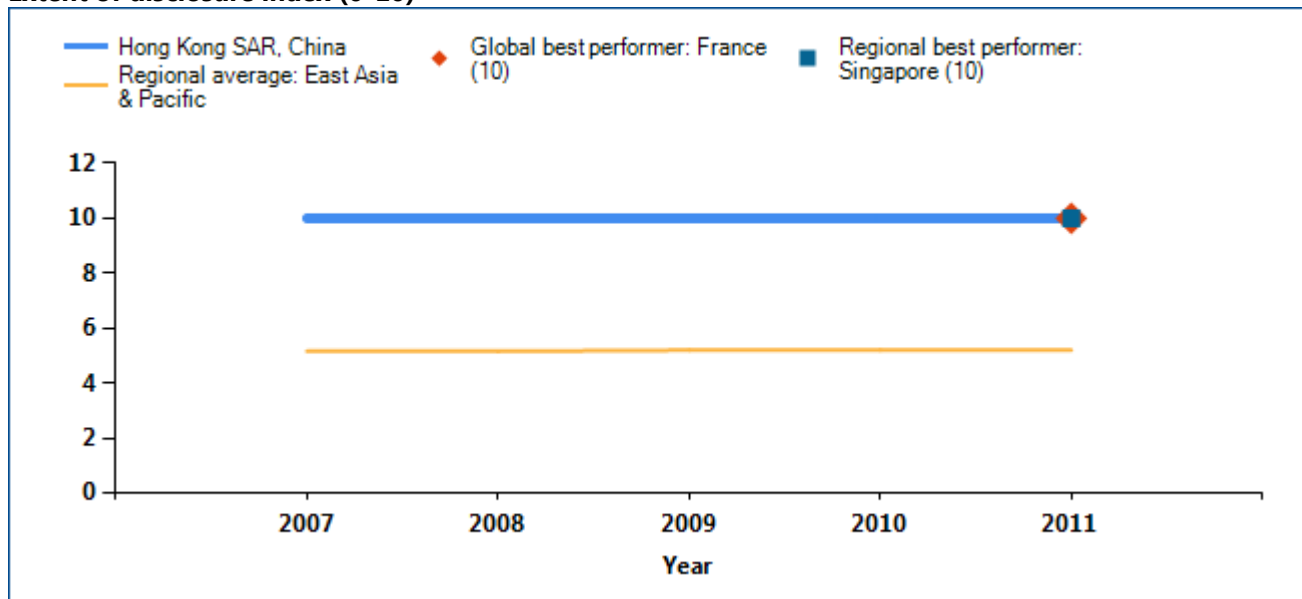
director liability and ease of shareholder suits indices may also be revealing (figure 7.2). Equally interesting may be the changes over time in the regional average scores for those indices.

Figure 7.2 Have investor protections become stronger?

Strength of investor protection index (0-10)

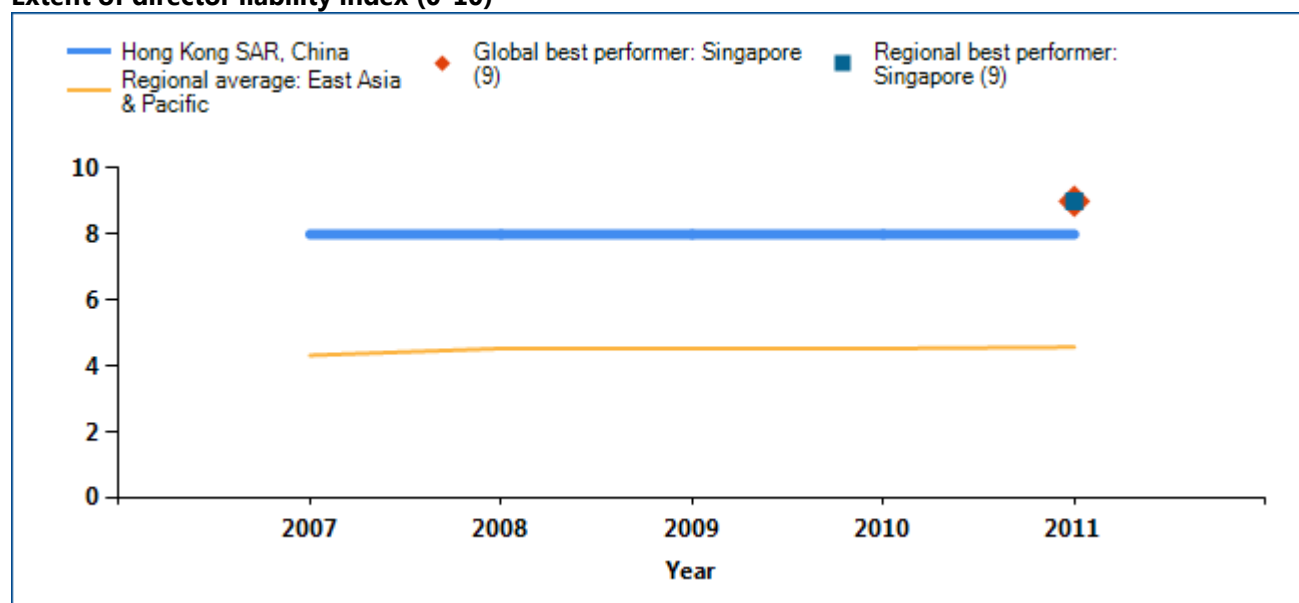


Extent of disclosure index (0-10)

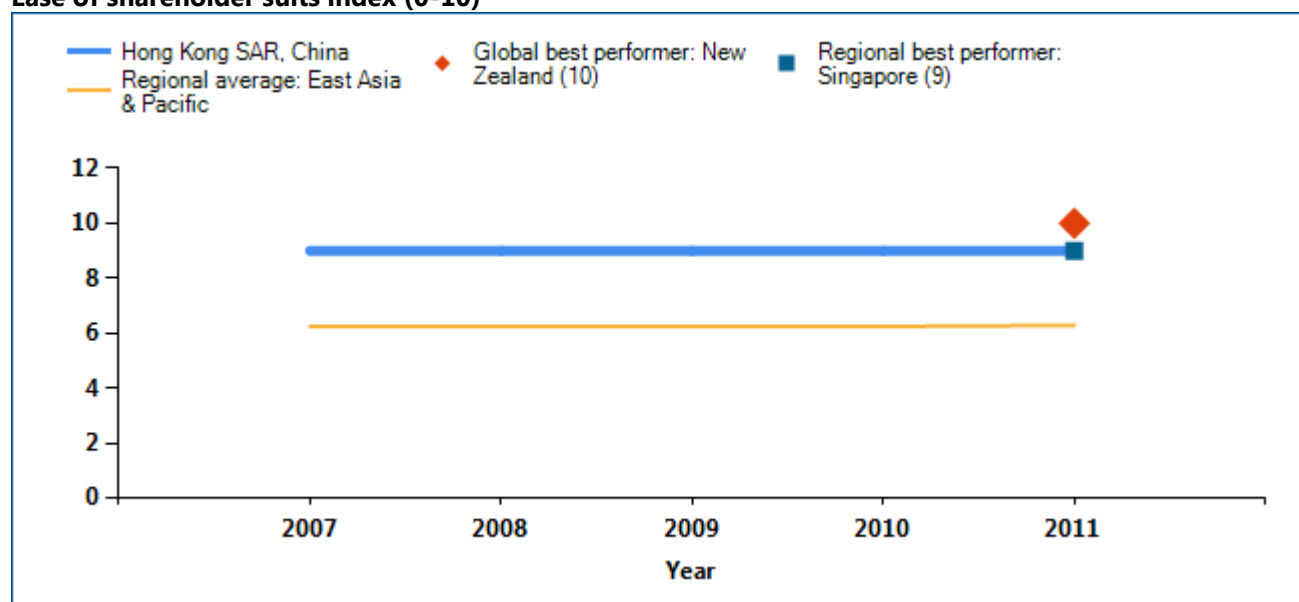


PROTECTING INVESTORS

Extent of director liability index (0-10)



Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)



Note: The higher the score, the stronger the investor protections. The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

Economies with the strongest protections of minority investors from self-dealing require more disclosure and define clear duties for directors. They also have well-functioning courts and up-to-date procedural rules that give minority investors the means to prove their case and obtain a judgment within a reasonable

time. So reforms to strengthen investor protections may move ahead on different fronts—such as through new or amended company laws or civil procedure rules. What investor protection reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 7.2)?

Table 7.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China strengthened investor protections—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2006), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PROTECTING INVESTORS

What are the details?

The protecting investors indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on detailed information collected through a survey of corporate and securities lawyers and are based on securities regulations, company laws and court rules of evidence. To construct the extent of disclosure, extent of director liability and ease of shareholder suits indices, a score is

assigned for each of a range of conditions relating to disclosure, director liability and shareholder suits in a standard case study transaction (see the notes at the end of this chapter). The summary below shows the details underlying the scores for Hong Kong SAR, China.

Summary of scoring for the protecting investors indicators in Hong Kong SAR, China

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China	East Asia & Pacific	OECD high income
Extent of disclosure index (0-10)	10	5	6
Extent of director liability index (0-10)	8	5	5
Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)	9	6	7
Strength of investor protection index (0-10)	9.0	5.4	6.0

	Score
Extent of disclosure index (0-10)	10
What corporate body provides legally sufficient approval for the transaction?	3
Whether disclosure of the conflict of interest by Mr. James to the board of directors is required?	2
Whether immediate disclosure of the transaction to the public and/or shareholders is required?	2
Whether disclosure of the transaction in published periodic filings (annual reports) is required?	2
Whether an external body must review the terms of the transaction before it takes place?	1
Extent of director liability index (0-10)	8
Whether shareholders can sue directly or derivatively for the damage that the Buyer-Seller transaction causes to the company?	1
Whether shareholders can hold Mr. James liable for the damage that the Buyer-Seller transaction causes to the company?	2
Whether shareholders can hold members of the approving body liable for the damage that the Buyer-Seller transaction causes to the company?	2

	Score
Whether a court can void the transaction upon a successful claim by a shareholder plaintiff?	1
Whether Mr. James pays damages for the harm caused to the company upon a successful claim by the shareholder plaintiff?	1
Whether Mr. James repays profits made from the transaction upon a successful claim by the shareholder plaintiff?	1
Whether fines and imprisonment can be applied against Mr. James?	0
Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)	9
Whether shareholders owning 10% or less of Buyer's shares can inspect transaction documents before filing suit?	1
Whether shareholders owning 10% or less of Buyer's shares can request an inspector to investigate the transaction?	1
Whether the plaintiff can obtain any documents from the defendant and witnesses during trial?	4
Whether the plaintiff can request categories of documents from the defendant without identifying specific ones?	0
Whether the plaintiff can directly question the defendant and witnesses during trial?	2
Whether the level of proof required for civil suits is lower than that of criminal cases?	1
Strength of investor protection index (0-10)	9.0

Source: Doing Business database.

Notes:

Extent of disclosure index (0–10)

Scoring for the extent of disclosure index is based on 5 components:

Which corporate body can provide legally sufficient approval for the transaction

0 = CEO or managing director alone; 1 = shareholders or board of directors vote and Mr. James can vote; 2 = board of directors votes and Mr. James cannot vote; 3 = shareholders vote and Mr. James cannot vote.

Whether disclosure of the conflict of interest by Mr. James to the board of directors is required

0 = no disclosure; 1 = disclosure of the existence of a conflict without any specifics; 2 = full disclosure of all material facts.

Whether immediate disclosure of the transaction to the public, the regulator or the shareholders is required

0 = no disclosure; 1 = disclosure on the transaction only; 2 = disclosure on the transaction and Mr. James's conflict of interest.

Whether disclosure of the transaction in the annual report is required

0 = no disclosure; 1 = disclosure on the transaction only; 2 = disclosure on the transaction and Mr. James's conflict of interest.

Whether it is required that an external body (for example, an external auditor) review the transaction before it takes place

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Extent of director liability index (0–10)

Scoring for the extent of director liability index is based on 7 components:

Whether shareholders can sue directly or derivatively for the damage that the Buyer-Seller transaction causes to the company

0 = suits are unavailable or available only for shareholders holding more than 10% of the company's share capital; 1 = direct or derivative suits available for shareholders holding 10% of share capital or less.

Whether shareholders can hold Mr. James liable for the damage that the transaction causes to the company

0 = Mr. James is not liable or is liable only if he acted fraudulently or in bad faith; 1 = Mr. James is liable if he influenced the approval or was negligent; 2 = Mr. James is liable if the transaction is unfair or prejudicial to the other shareholders.

Whether shareholders can hold the approving body (the CEO or members of the board of directors) liable for the damage that the transaction causes to the company

0 = members of the approving body are either not liable or liable only if they acted fraudulently or in bad faith; 1 = liable for negligence in the approval of the transaction; 2 = liable if the transaction is unfair or prejudicial to the other shareholders.

Whether a court can void the transaction upon a successful claim by a shareholder plaintiff

0 = rescission is unavailable or available only in case of Seller's fraud or bad faith; 1 = rescission is available when the transaction is oppressive or prejudicial to the other shareholders; 2 = rescission is available when the transaction is unfair or entails a conflict of interest.

Whether Mr. James pays damages for the harm caused to the company upon a successful claim by the shareholder plaintiff

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Whether Mr. James repays profits made from the transaction upon a successful claim by the shareholder plaintiff

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Whether both fines and imprisonment can be applied against Mr. James

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Ease of shareholder suits index (0–10)

Scoring for the ease of shareholder suits index is based on 6 components:

What range of documents is available to the plaintiff from the defendant and witnesses during trial

Score of 1 for each of the following: information that the defendant has indicated he intends to rely on for his defense; information that directly proves specific facts in the plaintiff's claim; any information relevant to the subject matter of the claim; and any information that may lead to the discovery of relevant information.

Whether the plaintiff can directly examine the defendant and witnesses during trial

0 = no; 1 = yes, with prior approval by the court of the questions posed; 2 = yes, without prior approval.

Whether the plaintiff can obtain categories of relevant documents from the defendant without identifying each document specifically

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Whether shareholders owning 10% or less of the company's share capital can request that a government inspector investigate the transaction without filing suit in court

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Whether shareholders owning 10% or less of the company's share capital have the right to inspect the transaction documents before filing suit

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Whether the standard of proof for civil suits is lower than that for a criminal case

0 = no; 1 = yes.

Strength of investor protection index (0–10)

Simple average of the extent of disclosure, extent of director liability and ease of shareholder suits indices.

PAYING TAXES

Taxes are essential. They fund the public amenities, infrastructure and services that are crucial for a properly functioning economy. But the level of tax rates needs to be carefully chosen—and needless complexity in tax rules avoided. According to *Doing Business* data, in economies where it is more difficult and costly to pay taxes, larger shares of economic activity end up in the informal sector—where businesses pay no taxes at all.

What do the indicators cover?

Using a case scenario, *Doing Business* measures the taxes and mandatory contributions that a medium-size company must pay in a given year as well as the administrative burden of paying taxes and contributions. This case scenario uses a set of financial statements and assumptions about transactions made over the year. Information is also compiled on the frequency of filing and payments as well as time taken to comply with tax laws. The ranking on the ease of paying taxes is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: number of annual payments, time and total tax rate, with a threshold being applied to the total tax rate.² To make the data comparable across economies, several assumptions about the business and the taxes and contributions are used.

- TaxpayerCo is a medium-size business that started operations on January 1, 2009.
- The business starts from the same financial position in each economy. All the taxes and mandatory contributions paid during the second year of operation are recorded.
- Taxes and mandatory contributions are measured at all levels of government.

WHAT THE PAYING TAXES INDICATORS MEASURE

Tax payments for a manufacturing company in 2010 (number per year adjusted for electronic or joint filing and payment)

Total number of taxes and contributions paid, including consumption taxes (value added tax, sales tax or goods and service tax)

Method and frequency of filing and payment

Time required to comply with 3 major taxes (hours per year)

Collecting information and computing the tax payable

Completing tax return forms, filing with proper agencies

Arranging payment or withholding

Preparing separate tax accounting books, if required

Total tax rate (% of profit before all taxes)

Profit or corporate income tax

Social contributions and labor taxes paid by the employer

Property and property transfer taxes

Dividend, capital gains and financial transactions taxes

Waste collection, vehicle, road and other taxes

- Taxes and mandatory contributions include corporate income tax, turnover tax and all labor taxes and contributions paid by the company.
- A range of standard deductions and exemptions are also recorded.

² The threshold is defined as the highest total tax rate among the top 30% of economies in the ranking on the total tax rate. It will be calculated and adjusted on a yearly basis. The threshold is not based on any underlying theory. Instead, it is intended to mitigate the effect of very low tax rates on the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

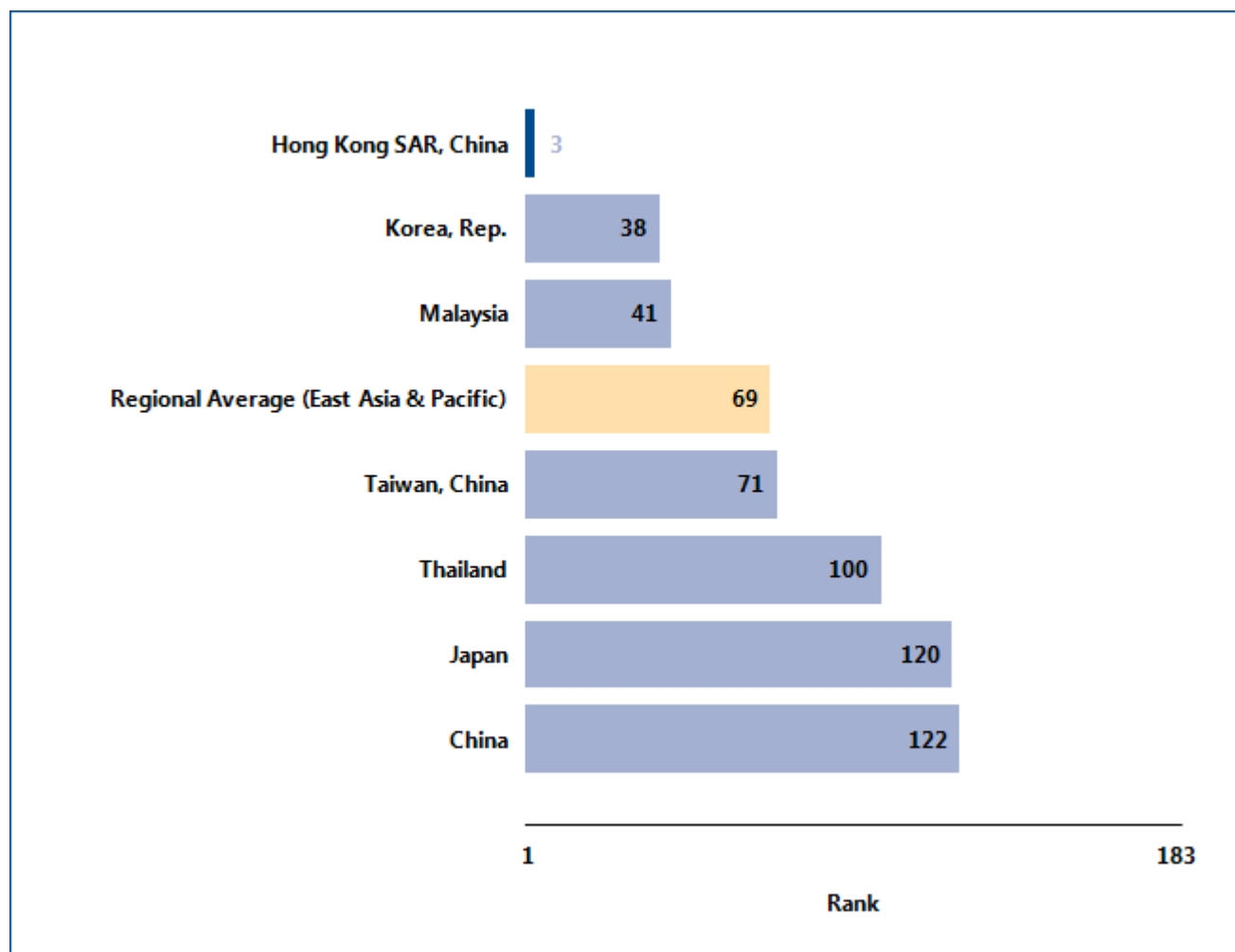
PAYING TAXES

Where does the economy stand today?

What is the administrative burden of complying with taxes in Hong Kong SAR, China—and how much do firms pay in taxes? On average, firms make 3 tax payments a year, spend 80 hours a year filing, preparing and paying taxes and pay total taxes amounting to 17.6% of profit (see the summary at the end of this chapter for details).

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 3 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of paying taxes (figure 8.1). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide other useful information for assessing the tax compliance burden for businesses in Hong Kong SAR, China.

Figure 8.1 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of paying taxes



Note: DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For all economies with a total tax rate below the threshold of 32.5% applied in DB2012, the total tax rate is set at 32.5% for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PAYING TAXES

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how easy (or difficult) it is to comply with tax rules in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data over time show which

aspects of the process have changed — and which have not (table 8.1). That can help identify where the potential for easing tax compliance is greatest.

Table 8.1 The ease of paying taxes in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	3	3
Payments (number per year)	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
Time (hours per year)	80	80	80	80	80	80	80
Total tax rate (% profit)	24.4	24.4	24.4	24.2	23.1	23.0	23.0

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For all economies with a total tax rate below the threshold of 32.5% applied in DB2012, the total tax rate is set at 32.5% for the purpose of calculating the rank on the ease of paying taxes.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

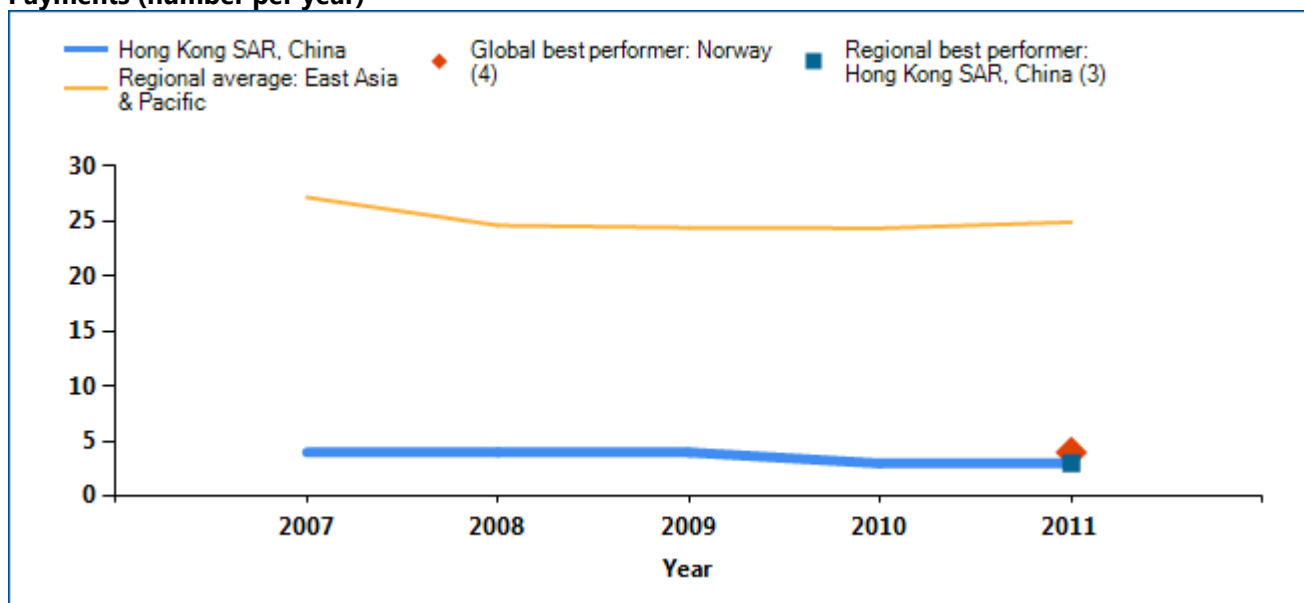
PAYING TAXES

Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the number of payments or the time required to prepare and file taxes (figure 8.2). These economies may provide a model for Hong Kong

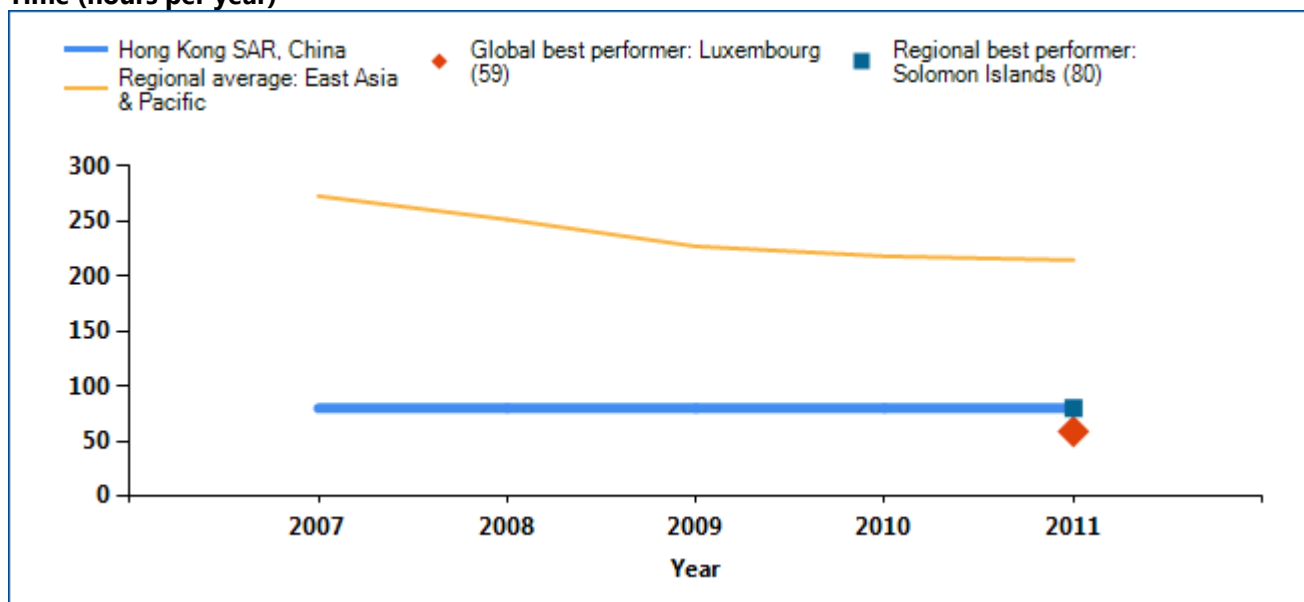
SAR, China on ways to ease the administrative burden of tax compliance. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

Figure 8.2 Has paying taxes become easier over time?

Payments (number per year)

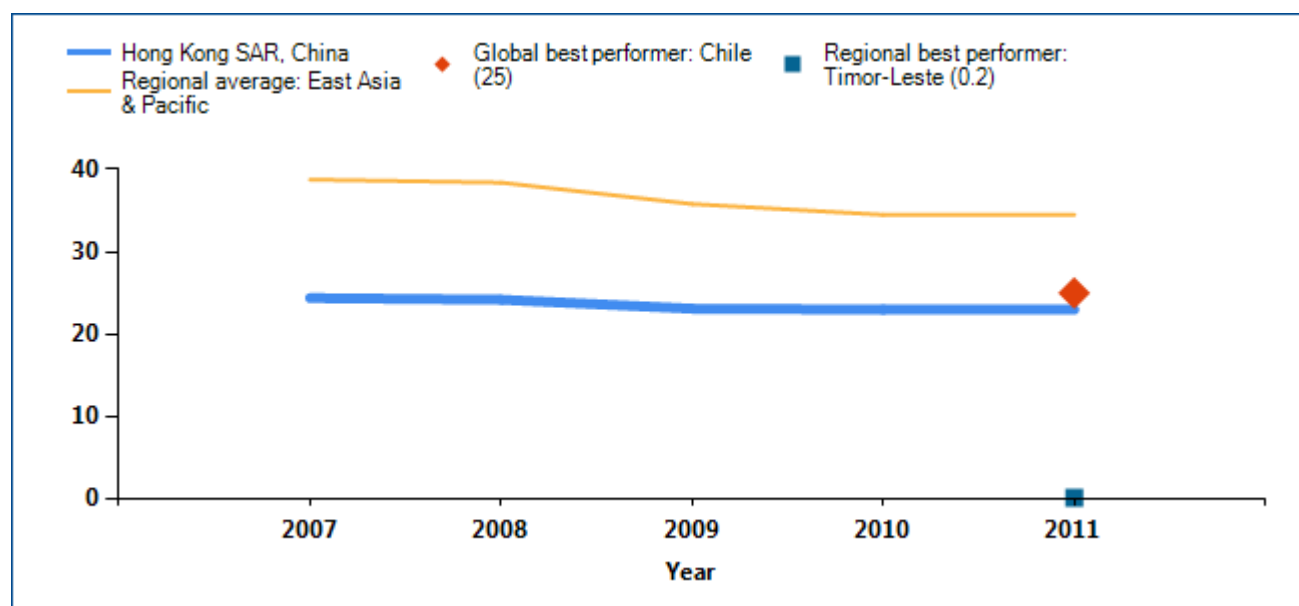


Time (hours per year)



PAYING TAXES

Total tax rate (% of profit)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. The best performer globally on an indicator has implemented the most efficient practices in its tax system but is not necessarily the one with the highest ranking on the indicator. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional ranking on an indicator. DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For all economies with a total tax rate below the threshold of 32.5% applied in DB2012, the total tax rate is set at 32.5% for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

Source: Doing Business database.

PAYING TAXES

Economies around the world have made paying taxes faster and easier for businesses—such as by consolidating filings, reducing the frequency of payments or offering electronic filing and payment. Many have lowered tax rates. Changes have brought

concrete results. Some economies simplifying tax payment and reducing rates have seen tax revenue rise. What tax reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 8.2)?

Table 8.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made paying taxes easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	Hong Kong SAR (China) abolished the fuel tax on diesel.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2006), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

PAYING TAXES

What are the details?

The indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on a standard set of taxes and contributions that would be paid by the case study company used by *Doing Business* in collecting the data (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators cover). Tax practitioners are asked to review standard financial statements as well as a standard list of

transactions that the company completed during the year. Respondents are asked how much in taxes and mandatory contributions the business must pay and what the process is for doing so. The taxes and contributions paid are listed in the summary below, along with the associated number of payments, time and tax rate.

Summary of tax rates and administrative burden in Hong Kong SAR, China

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China	East Asia & Pacific	OECD high income
Payments (number per year)	3	25	13
Time (hours per year)	80	215	186
Profit tax (%)	17.6	16.8	15.4
Labor tax and contributions (%)	5.3	10.7	24.0
Other taxes (%)	0.1	6.9	3.2
Total tax rate (% profit)	23.0	34.5	42.7

Tax or mandatory contribution	Payments (number)	Notes on payments	Time (hours)	Statutory tax rate	Tax base	Total tax rate (% of profit)	Notes on total tax rate
Corporate income tax	1		50	16.5%	taxable profits	17.6	
Employer paid - Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) contributions	1	online filing	30	5%	gross salaries	5.3	
Property tax	1	online filing	0	5%	annual rental value	0.1	
Totals	3		80			23.0	

Note: DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. For all economies with a total tax rate below the threshold of 32.5% applied in DB2012, the total tax rate is set at 32.5% for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

In today's globalized world, making trade between economies easier is increasingly important for business. Excessive document requirements, burdensome customs procedures, inefficient port operations and inadequate infrastructure all lead to extra costs and delays for exporters and importers, stifling trade potential. Research shows that exporters in developing countries gain more from a 10% drop in their trading costs than from a similar reduction in the tariffs applied to their products in global markets.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the time and cost (excluding tariffs) associated with exporting and importing a standard shipment of goods by ocean transport, and the number of documents necessary to complete the transaction. The indicators cover procedural requirements such as documentation requirements and procedures at customs and other regulatory agencies as well as at the port. They also cover trade logistics, including the time and cost of inland transport to the largest business city. The ranking on the ease of trading across borders is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: documents, time and cost to export and import.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the traded goods.

The business:

- Is of medium size and employs 60 people.
- Is located in the periurban area of the economy's largest business city.
- Is a private, limited liability company, domestically owned, formally registered and operating under commercial laws and regulations of the economy.

The traded goods:

- Are not hazardous nor do they include military items.

WHAT THE TRADING ACROSS BORDERS INDICATORS MEASURE

Documents required to export and import (number)

- Bank documents
- Customs clearance documents
- Port and terminal handling documents
- Transport documents

Time required to export and import (days)

- Obtaining all the documents
- Inland transport and handling
- Customs clearance and inspections
- Port and terminal handling
- Does not include ocean transport time

Cost required to export and import (US\$ per container)

- All documentation
- Inland transport and handling
- Customs clearance and inspections
- Port and terminal handling
- Official costs only, no bribes

- Do not require refrigeration or any other special environment.
- Do not require any special phytosanitary or environmental safety standards other than accepted international standards.
- Are one of the economy's leading export or import products.
- Are transported in a dry-cargo, 20-foot full container load.

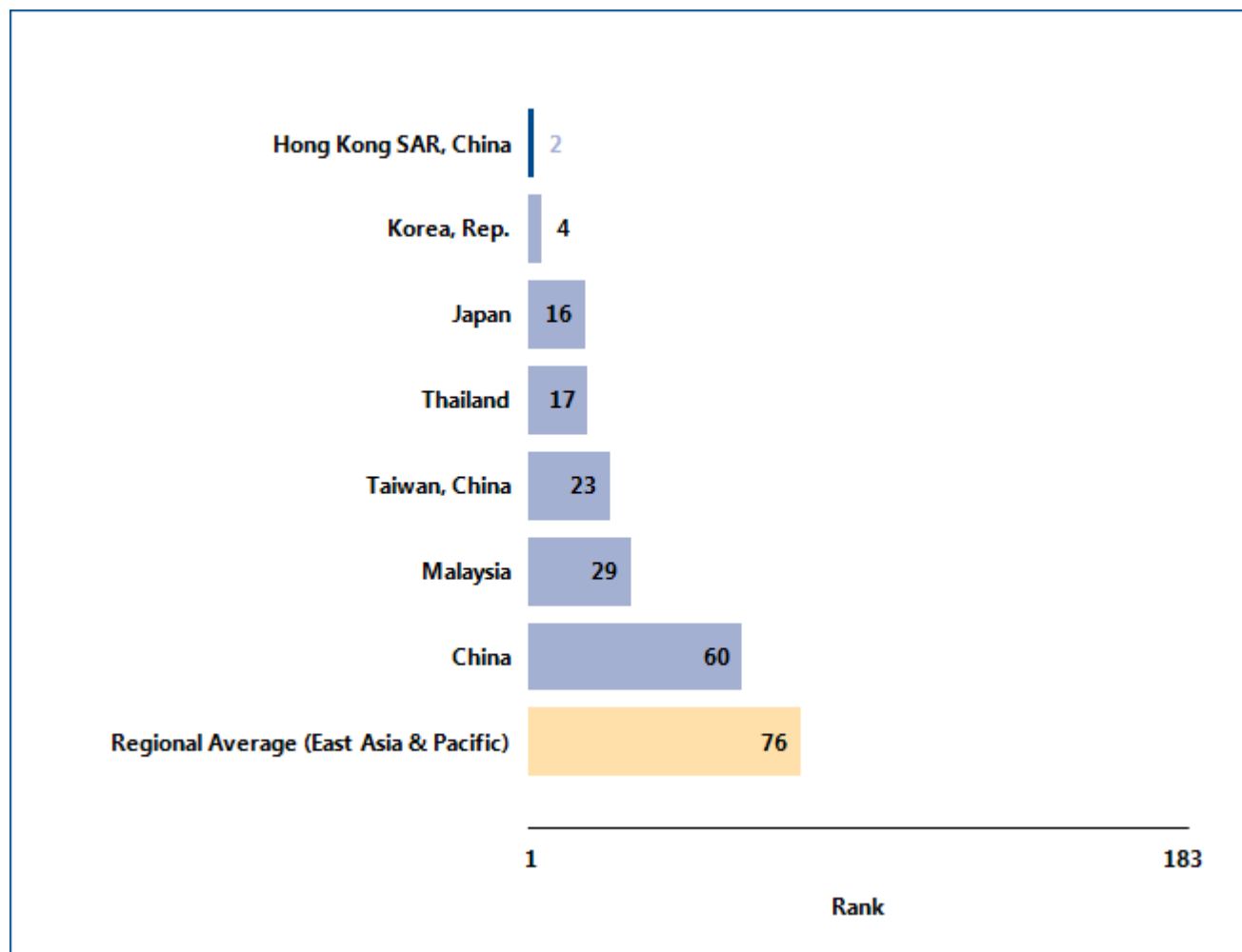
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Where does the economy stand today?

What does it take to export or import in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, exporting a standard container of goods requires 4 documents, takes 5 days and costs \$575. Importing the same container of goods requires 4 documents, takes 5 days and costs \$565 (see the summary of procedures and documents at the end of this chapter for details).

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 2 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of trading across borders (figure 9.1). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide other useful information for assessing how easy it is for a business in Hong Kong SAR, China to export and import goods.

Figure 9.1 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of trading across borders



Source: *Doing Business* database.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how easy (or difficult) it is to export or import in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data over time show which aspects

of the process have changed—and which have not (table 9.1). That can help identify where the potential for improvement is greatest.

Table 9.1 The ease of trading across borders in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	2	2
Documents to export (number)	6	4	4	4	4	4	4
Time to export (days)	13	6	6	6	6	6	5
Cost to export (US\$ per container)	425	525	525	625	625	625	575
Documents to import (number)	8	4	4	4	4	4	4
Time to import (days)	17	5	5	5	5	5	5
Cost to import (US\$ per container)	425	525	525	633	583	600	565

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

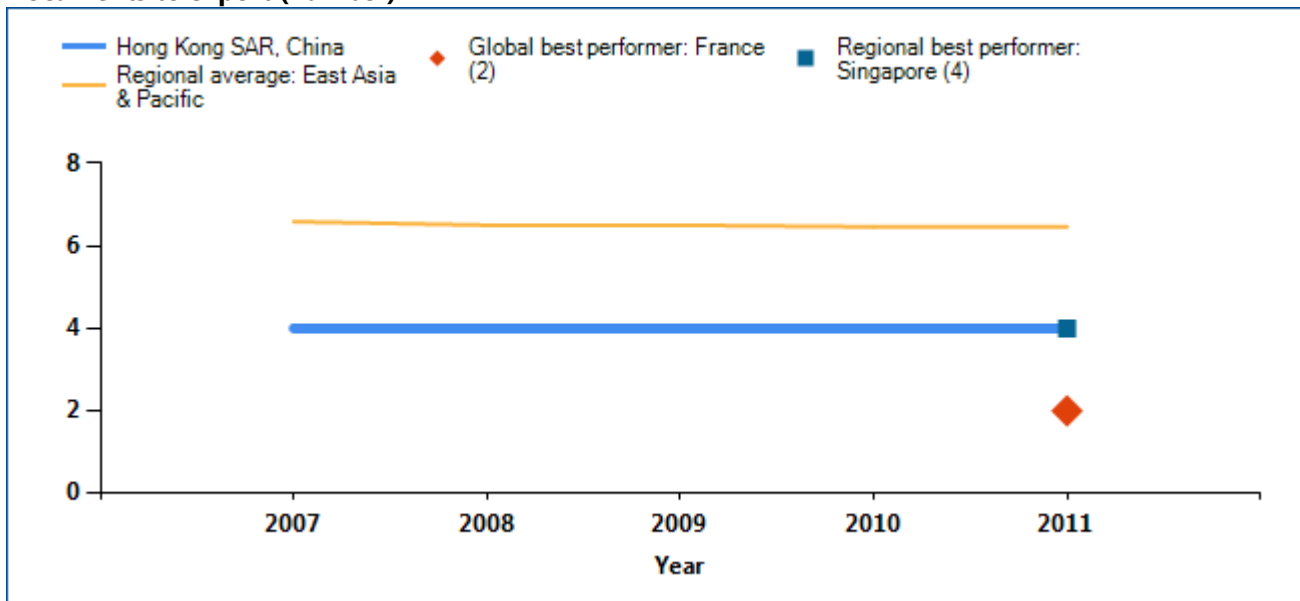
Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the documents, time or cost required to export or import (figure 9.2). These economies may provide a model for Hong Kong SAR,

China on ways to improve the ease of trading across borders. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

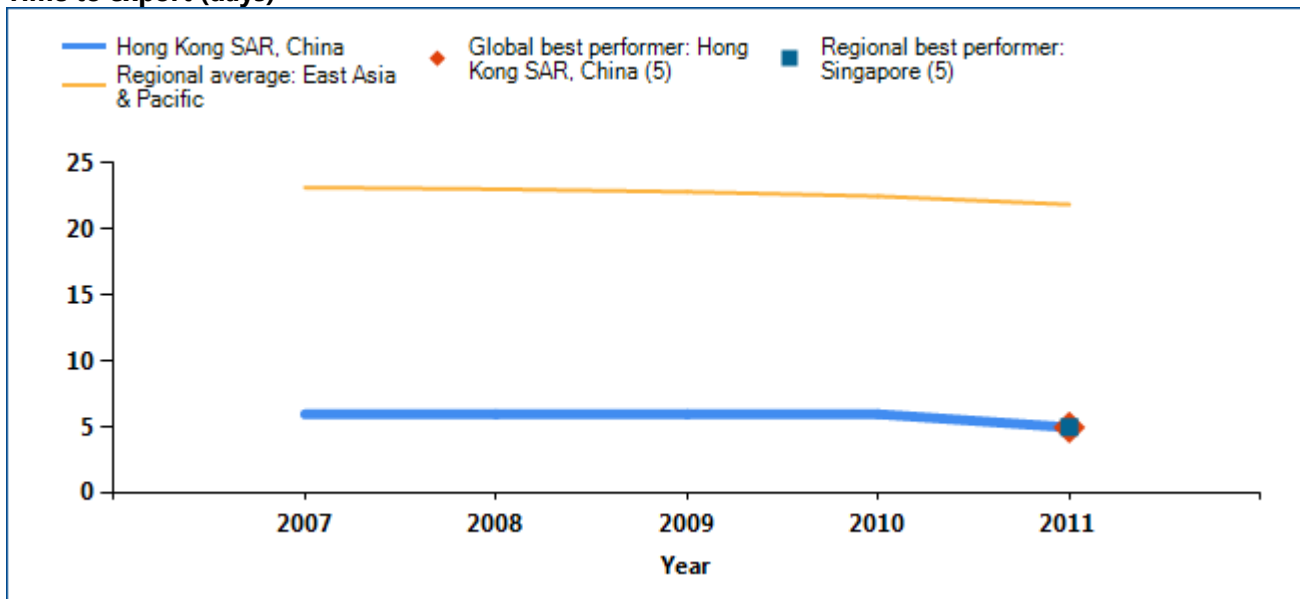
TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Figure 9.2 Has trading across borders become easier over time?

Documents to export (number)

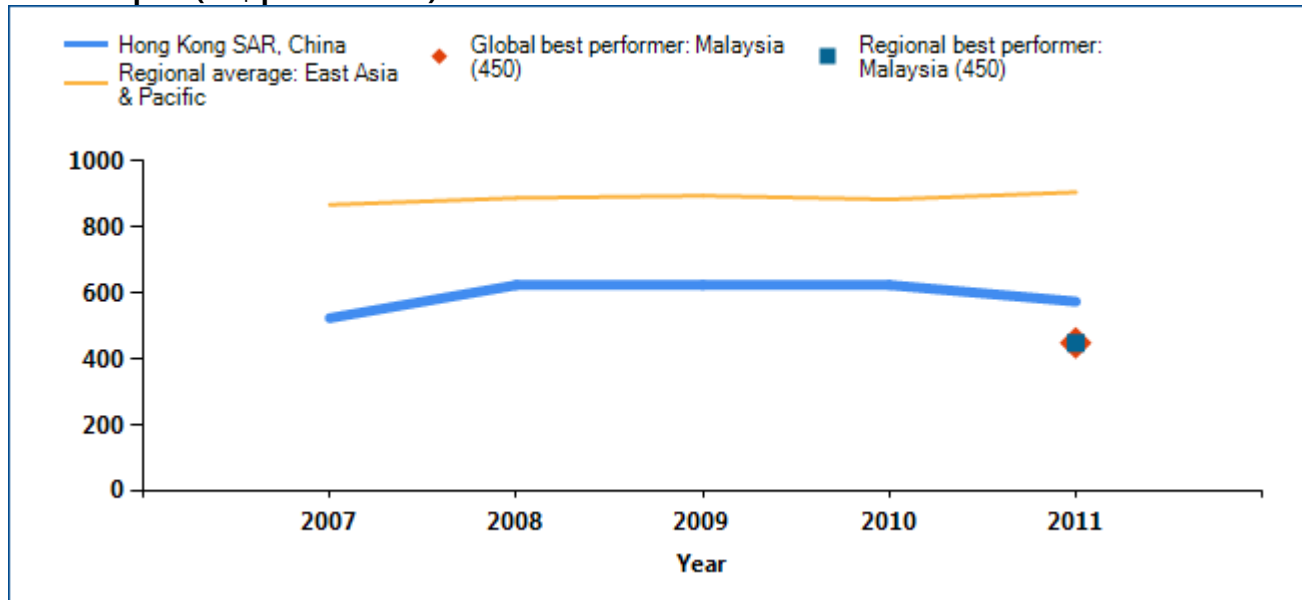


Time to export (days)

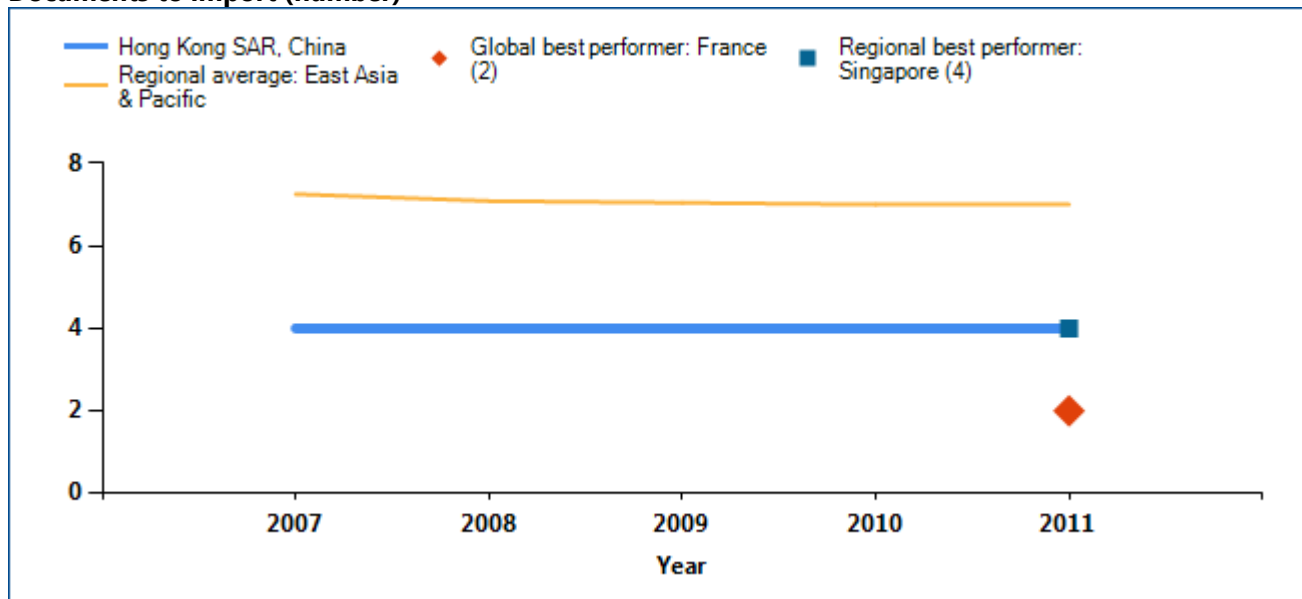


TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Cost to export (US\$ per container)

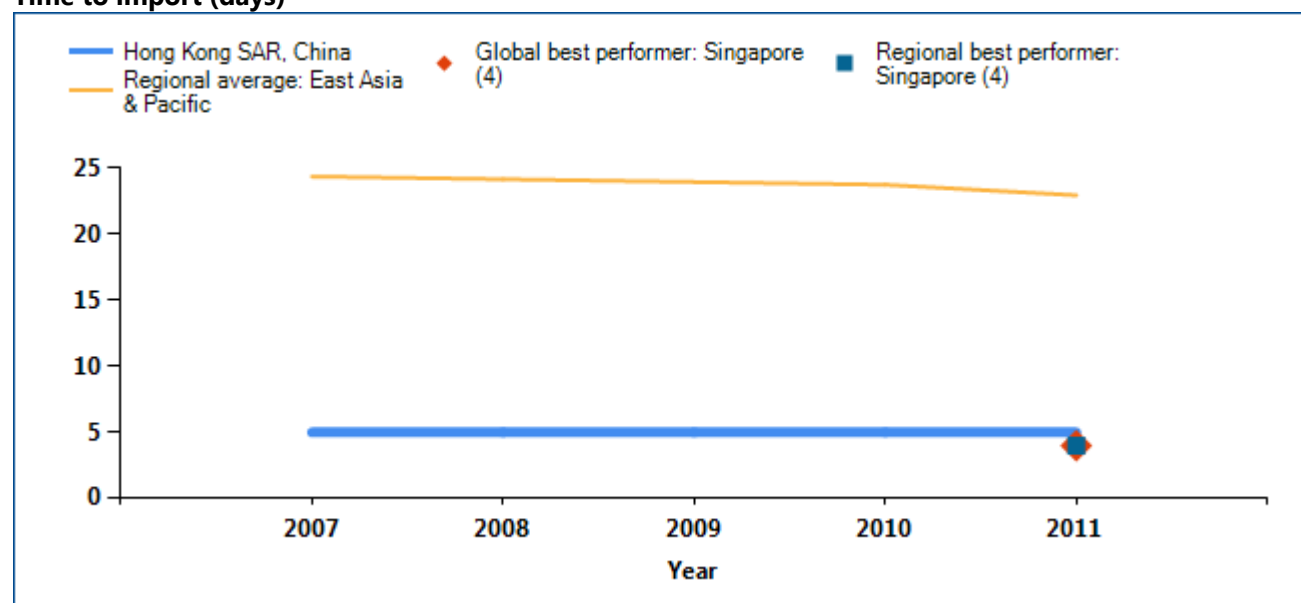


Documents to import (number)

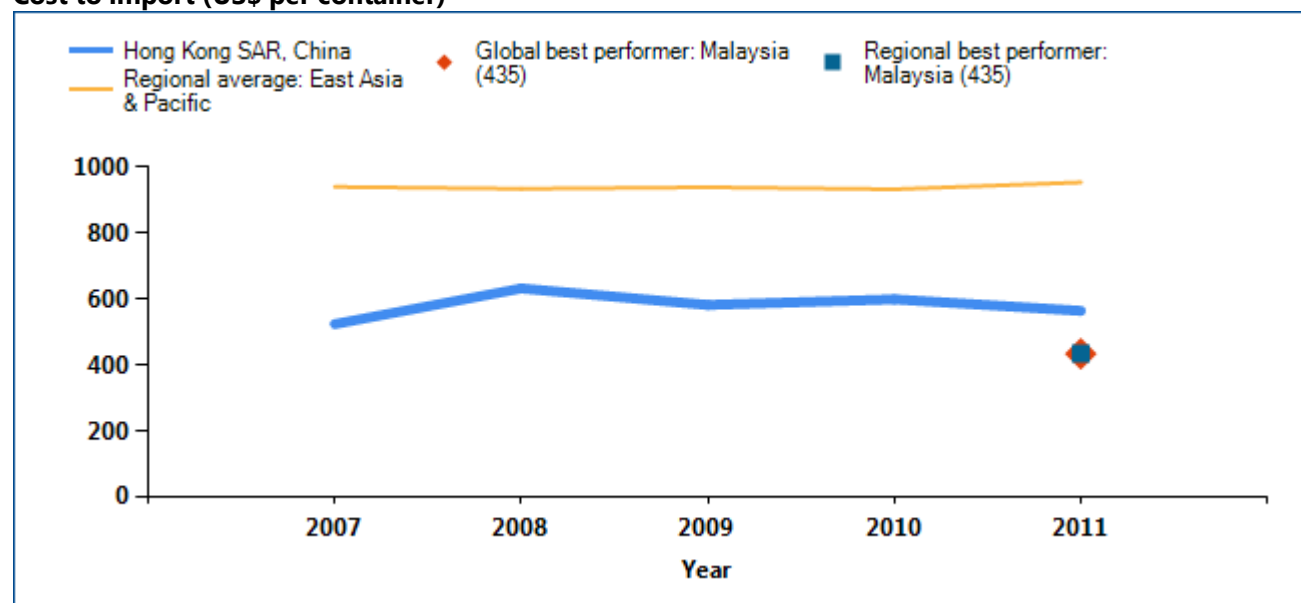


TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Time to import (days)



Cost to import (US\$ per container)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator.

Source: Doing Business database.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

In economies around the world, trading across borders as measured by *Doing Business* has become faster and easier over the years. Governments have introduced tools to facilitate trade—including single windows, risk-based inspections and electronic data interchange

systems. These changes help improve the trading environment and boost firms' international competitiveness. What trade reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 9.2)?

Table 9.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made trading across borders easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2006), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

What are the details?

The indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on a set of specific procedural requirements for trading a standard shipment of goods by ocean transport (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators cover). Information on the procedures as well as the required documents and the time and cost to complete each procedure is

collected from local freight forwarders, shipping lines, customs brokers, port officials and banks. The procedural requirements, and the associated time and cost, for exporting and importing a standard shipment of goods are listed in the summary below, along with the required documents.

Summary of procedures and documents for trading across borders in Hong Kong SAR, China

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China	East Asia & Pacific	OECD high income
Documents to export (number)	4	6	4
Time to export (days)	5	22	10
Cost to export (US\$ per container)	575	906	1,032
Documents to import (number)	4	7	5
Time to import (days)	5	23	11
Cost to import (US\$ per container)	565	954	1,085

Procedures to export	Time (days)	Cost (US\$)
Documents preparation	1	90
Customs clearance and technical control	1	0
Ports and terminal handling	2	265
Inland transportation and handling	1	220
Totals	5	575

Procedures to import	Time (days)	Cost (US\$)
Documents preparation	2	100
Customs clearance and technical control	1	0
Ports and terminal handling	1	265
Inland transportation and handling	1	200
Totals	5	565

TRADING ACROSS BORDERS

Documents to export
Bill of lading
Commercial Invoice
Customs export declaration
Packing List

Documents to import
Bill of lading
Customs import declaration
Commercial invoice
Packing list

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Well-functioning courts help businesses expand their network and markets. Without effective contract enforcement, people might well do business only with family, friends and others with whom they have established relationships. Where contract enforcement is efficient, firms are more likely to engage with new borrowers or customers, and they have greater access to credit.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business measures the efficiency of the judicial system in resolving a commercial dispute before local courts. Following the step-by-step evolution of a standardized case study, it collects data relating to the time, cost and procedural complexity of resolving a commercial lawsuit. The ranking on the ease of enforcing contracts is the simple average of the percentile rankings on its component indicators: procedures, time and cost.

The dispute in the case study involves the breach of a sales contract between 2 domestic businesses. The case study assumes that the court hears an expert on the quality of the goods in dispute. This distinguishes the case from simple debt enforcement. To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the case:

- The seller and buyer are located in the economy's largest business city.
- The buyer orders custom-made goods, then fails to pay.
- The seller sues the buyer before a competent court.
- The value of the claim is 200% of income per capita.
- The seller requests a pretrial attachment to secure the claim.

WHAT THE ENFORCING CONTRACTS INDICATORS MEASURE

Procedures to enforce a contract through the courts (number)

Any interaction between the parties in a commercial dispute, or between them and the judge or court officer

Steps to file and serve the case

Steps for trial and judgment

Steps to enforce the judgment

Time required to complete procedures (calendar days)

Time to file and serve the case

Time for trial and obtaining judgment

Time to enforce the judgment

Cost required to complete procedures (% of claim)

No bribes

Average attorney fees

Court costs, including expert fees

Enforcement costs

- The dispute on the quality of the goods requires an expert opinion.
- The judge decides in favor of the seller; there is no appeal.
- The seller enforces the judgment through a public sale of the buyer's movable assets.

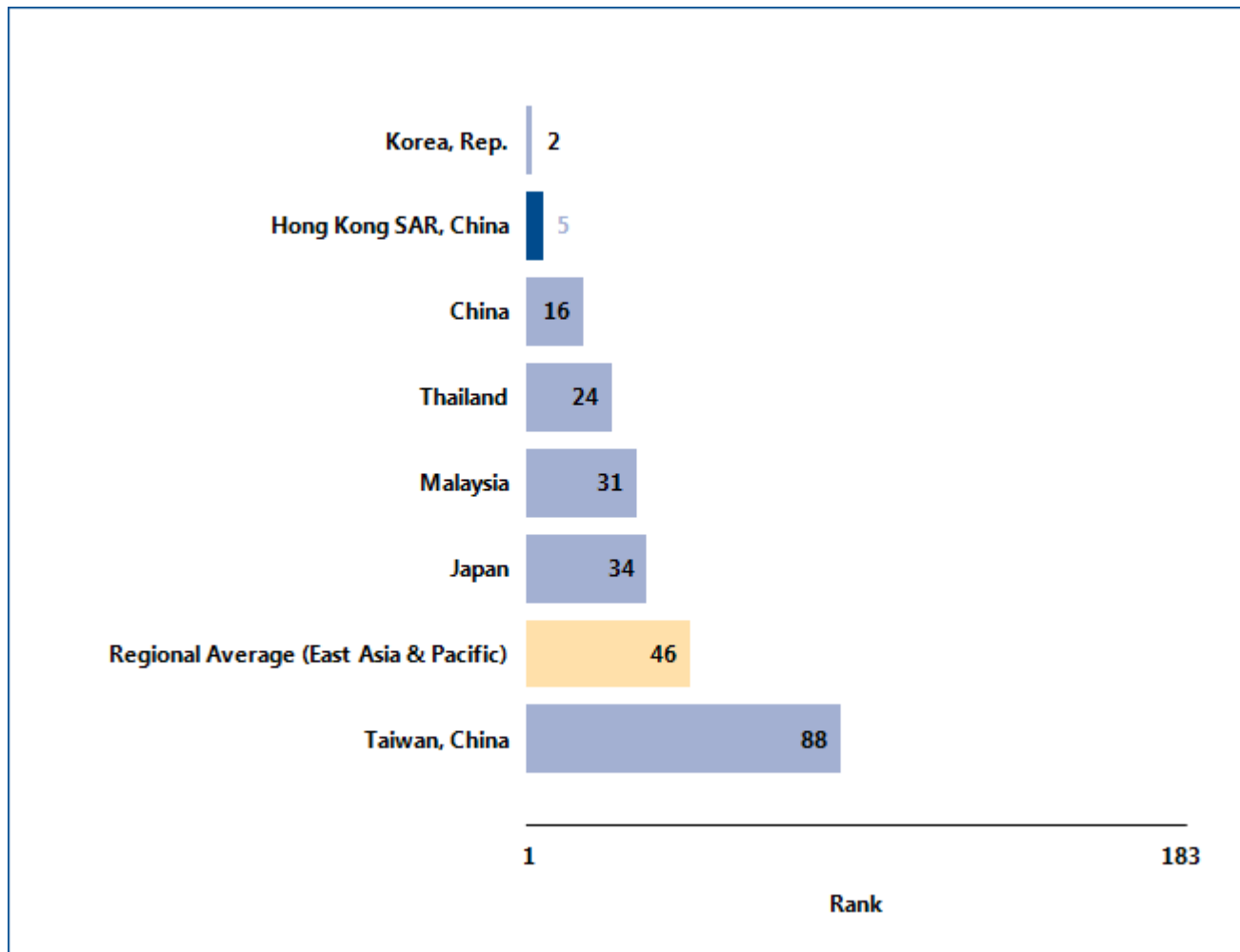
ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Where does the economy stand today?

How efficient is the process of resolving a commercial dispute through the courts in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, enforcing a contract requires 26 procedures, takes 280 days and costs 21.2% of the value of the claim (see the summary at the end of this chapter for details).

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 5 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of enforcing contracts (figure 10.1). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide other useful benchmarks for assessing the efficiency of contract enforcement in Hong Kong SAR, China.

Figure 10.1 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of enforcing contracts



Source: *Doing Business* database.

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect how easy (or difficult) it is to enforce a contract in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data on the underlying

indicators over time help identify which areas have changed and where the potential for improvement is greatest (table 10.1).

Table 10.1 The ease of enforcing contracts in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2004	DB2005	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	5
Time (days)	211	211	211	211	211	211	280	280	280
Cost (% of claim)	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2
Procedures (number)	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

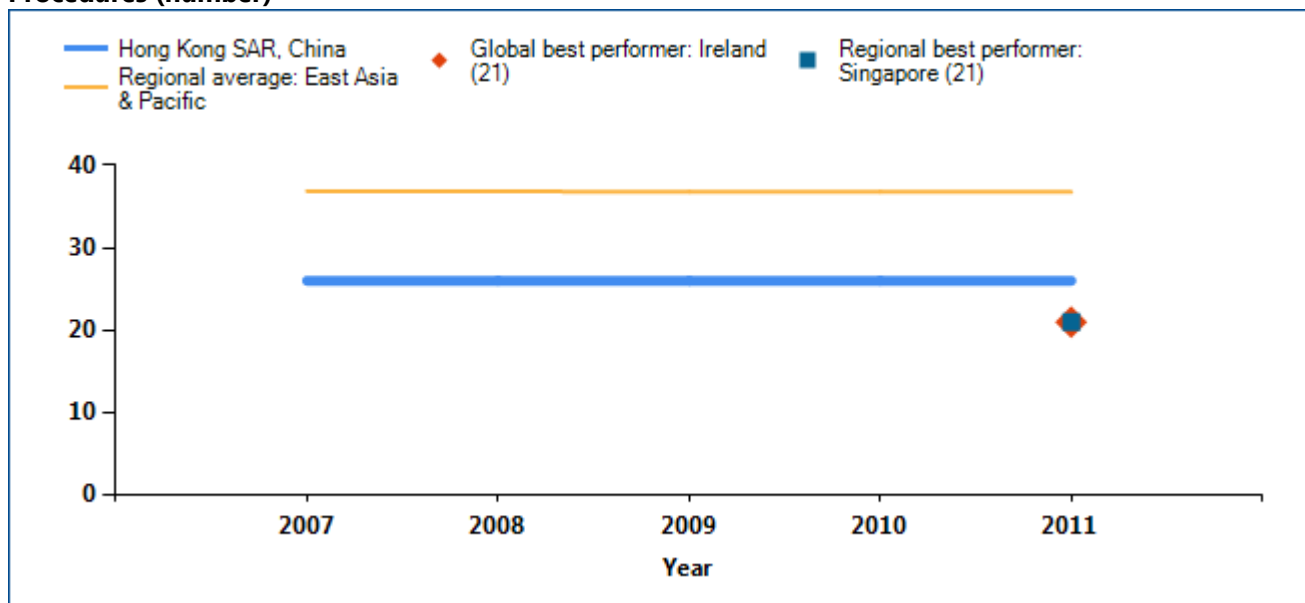
ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the number of steps, time or cost required to enforce a contract through the courts (figure 10.2). These economies may provide a model

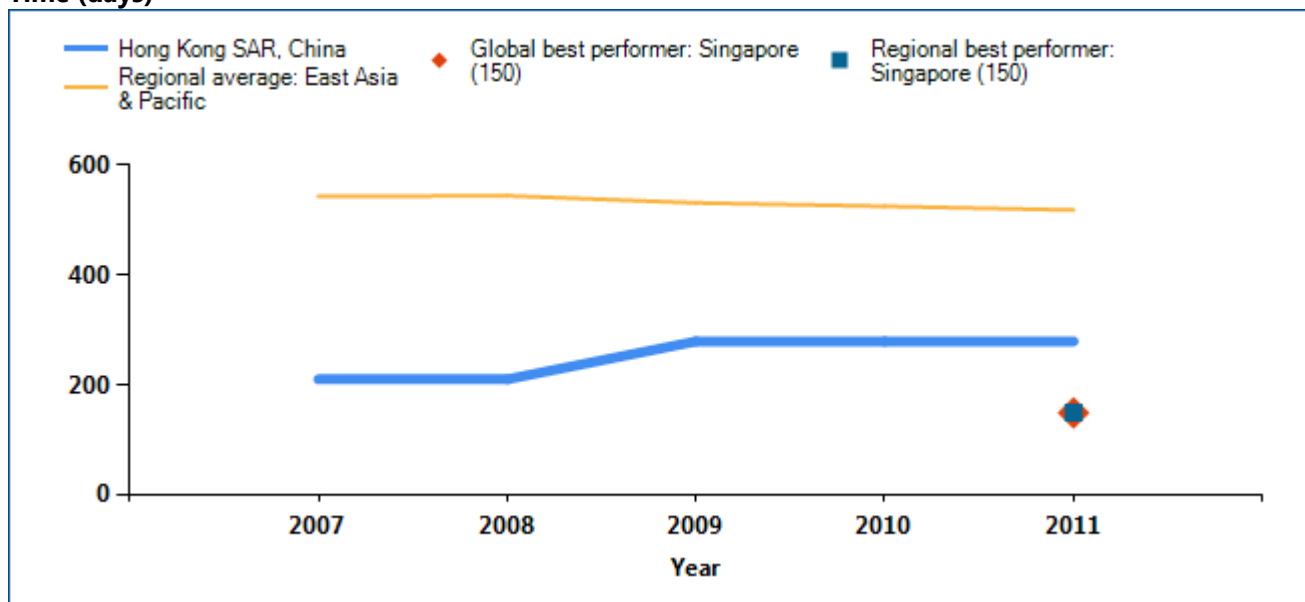
for Hong Kong SAR, China on ways to improve the efficiency of contract enforcement. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

Figure 10.2 Has enforcing contracts become easier over time?

Procedures (number)

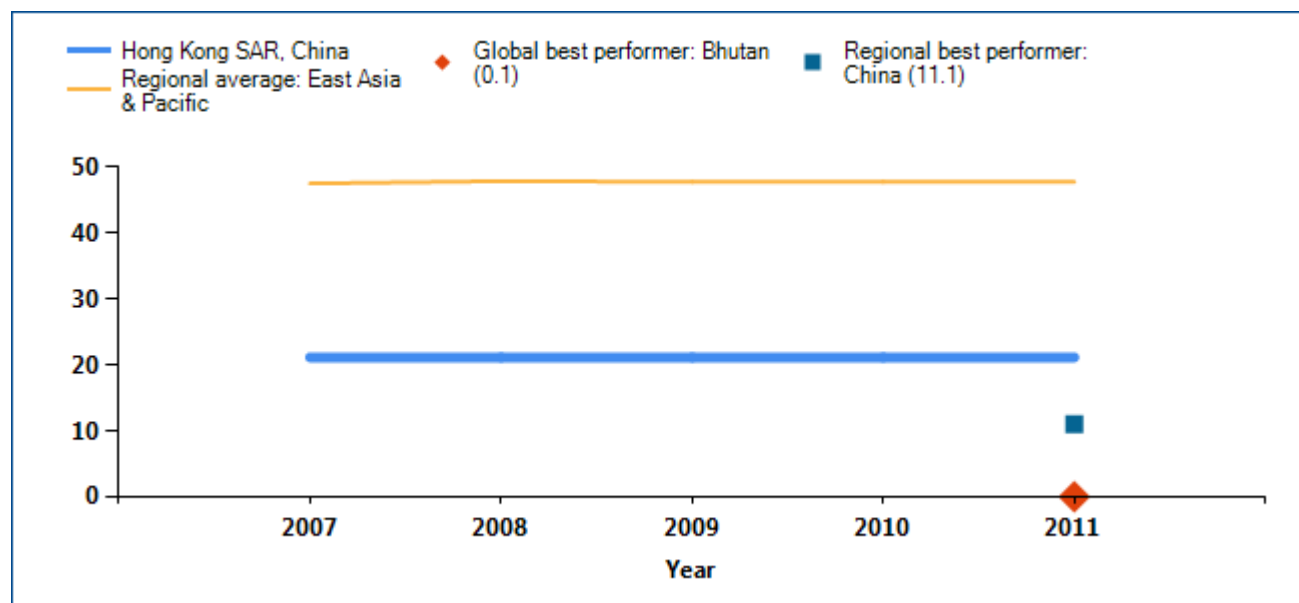


Time (days)



ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Cost (% of claim)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

Economies in all regions have improved contract enforcement in recent years. A judiciary can be improved in different ways. Higher-income economies tend to look for ways to enhance efficiency by introducing new technology. Lower-income economies often work on reducing backlogs by introducing

periodic reviews to clear inactive cases from the docket and by making procedures faster. What reforms making it easier (or more difficult) to enforce contracts has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 10.2)?

Table 10.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made enforcing contracts easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	Reforms implemented in the civil justice system of Hong Kong SAR (China) will help increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of commercial dispute resolution.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	No reform.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

ENFORCING CONTRACTS

What are the details?

The indicators reported here for Hong Kong SAR, China are based on a set of specific procedural steps required to resolve a standardized commercial dispute through the courts (see the section in this chapter on what the indicators cover). These procedures, and the time and cost of completing them, are identified through study of the codes of civil procedure and

other court regulations, as well as through surveys completed by local litigation lawyers (and, in a quarter of the economies covered by *Doing Business*, by judges as well). The procedures for resolving a commercial lawsuit, and the associated time and cost, are listed in the summary below.

Summary of procedures for enforcing a contract in Hong Kong SAR, China—and the time and cost

Indicator	Hong Kong SAR, China	East Asia & Pacific	OECD high income
Time (days)	280	518.71	518.03
Filing and service	5		
Trial and judgment	230		
Enforcement of judgment	45		
Cost (% of claim)	21.2	47.79	19.71
Attorney cost (% of claim)	19.5		
Court cost (% of claim)	0.7		
Enforcement Cost (% of claim)	1		
Procedures (number)	26	36.75	31.42

Source: *Doing Business* database.

RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

A robust bankruptcy system functions as a filter, ensuring the survival of economically efficient companies and reallocating the resources of inefficient ones. Fast and cheap insolvency proceedings result in the speedy return of businesses to normal operation and increase returns to creditors. By improving the expectations of creditors and debtors about the outcome of insolvency proceedings, well-functioning insolvency systems can facilitate access to finance, save more viable businesses and thereby improve growth and sustainability in the economy overall.

What do the indicators cover?

Doing Business studies the time, cost and outcome of insolvency proceedings involving domestic entities. It does not measure insolvency proceedings of individuals and financial institutions. The data are derived from survey responses by local insolvency practitioners and verified through a study of laws and regulations as well as public information on bankruptcy systems.

The ranking on the ease of resolving insolvency is based on the recovery rate, which is recorded as cents on the dollar recouped by creditors through reorganization, liquidation or debt enforcement (foreclosure) proceedings. The recovery rate is a function of time, cost and other factors, such as lending rate and the likelihood of the company continuing to operate.

To make the data comparable across economies, *Doing Business* uses several assumptions about the business and the case. It assumes that the company:

- Is a domestically owned, limited liability company operating a hotel.
- Operates in the economy's largest business city.

WHAT THE RESOLVING INSOLVENCY INDICATORS MEASURE

Time required to recover debt (years)

Measured in calendar years

Appeals and requests for extension are included

Cost required to recover debt (% of debtor's estate)

Measured as percentage of estate value

Court fees

Fees of insolvency administrators

Lawyers' fees

Assessors' and auctioneers' fees

Other related fees

Recovery rate for creditors (cents on the dollar)

Measures the cents on the dollar recovered by creditors

Present value of debt recovered

Official costs of the insolvency proceedings are deducted

Depreciation of furniture is taken into account

Outcome for the business (survival or not) affects the maximum value that can be recovered

- Has 201 employees, 1 main secured creditor and 50 unsecured creditors.
- Has a higher value as a going concern—and the efficient outcome is either reorganization or sale as a going concern, not piecemeal liquidation.

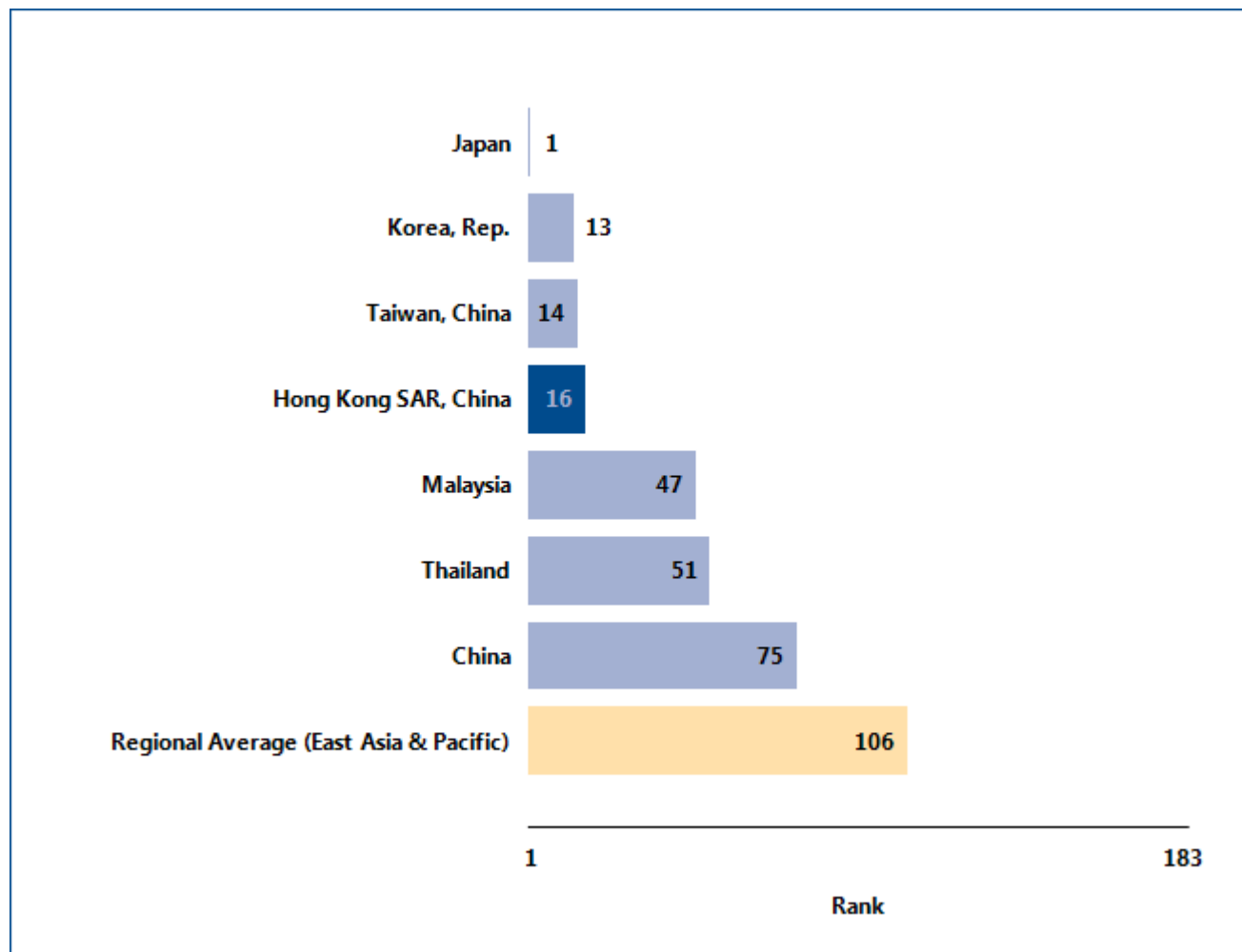
RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

Where does the economy stand today?

Speed, low costs and continuation of viable businesses characterize the top-performing economies. How efficient are insolvency proceedings in Hong Kong SAR, China? According to data collected by *Doing Business*, resolving insolvency takes 1.1 years on average and costs 9% of the debtor's estate. The average recovery rate is 81.2 cents on the dollar.

Globally, Hong Kong SAR, China stands at 16 in the ranking of 183 economies on the ease of resolving insolvency (figure 11.1). The rankings for comparator economies and the regional average ranking provide other useful benchmarks for assessing the efficiency of insolvency proceedings in Hong Kong SAR, China.

Figure 11.1 How Hong Kong SAR, China and comparator economies rank on the ease of resolving insolvency



Source: *Doing Business* database.

RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

What are the changes over time?

While the most recent *Doing Business* data reflect the efficiency of insolvency proceedings in Hong Kong SAR, China today, data over time show where the efficiency has changed—and where it has not (table 11.1). That can help identify where the potential for improvement is greatest.

Table 11.1 The ease of resolving insolvency in Hong Kong SAR, China over time
By *Doing Business* report year

Indicator	DB2004	DB2005	DB2006	DB2007	DB2008	DB2009	DB2010	DB2011	DB2012
Rank	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15	16
Time (years)	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Cost (% of estate)	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Recovery rate (cents on the dollar)	81.2	81.2	81.2	79.0	79.0	79.8	79.8	81.2	81.2

Note: n.a. = not applicable (the economy was not included in *Doing Business* for that year). DB2012 rankings reflect changes to the methodology. "No practice" indicates that in each of the previous 5 years the economy had no cases involving a judicial reorganization, judicial liquidation or debt enforcement procedure (foreclosure). This means that creditors are unlikely to recover their money through a formal legal process (in or out of court). The recovery rate for "no practice" economies is 0.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

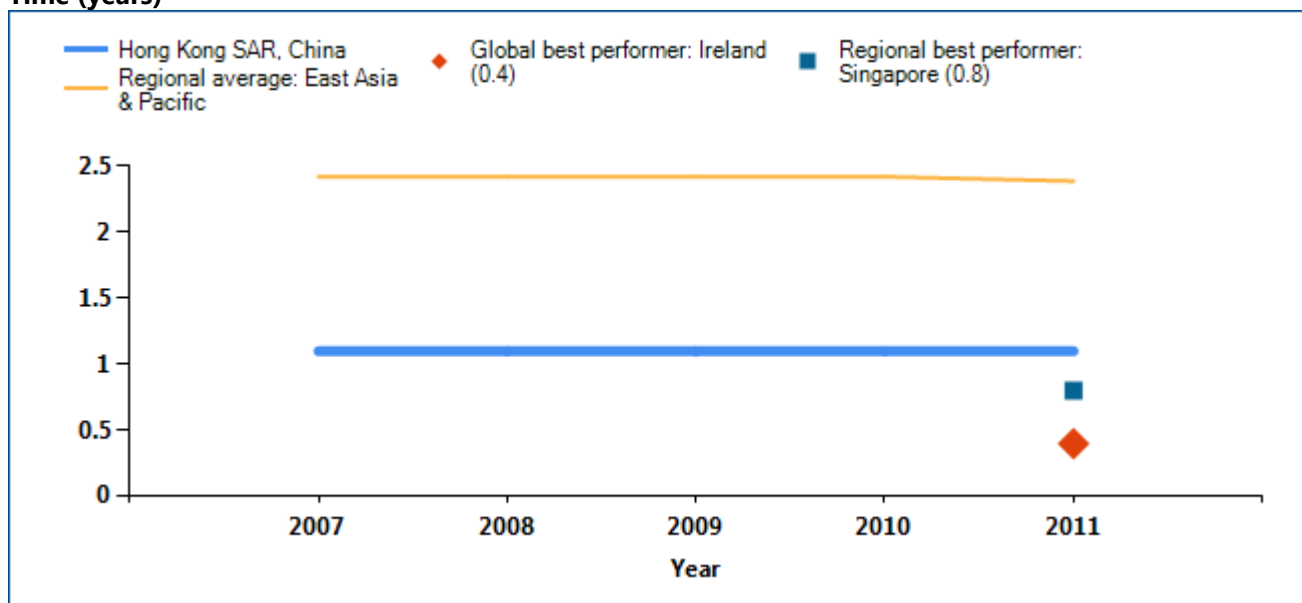
RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

Equally helpful may be the benchmarks provided by the economies that today have the best performance regionally or globally on the time or cost of insolvency proceedings or on the recovery rate (figure 11.2). These economies may provide a model for Hong Kong

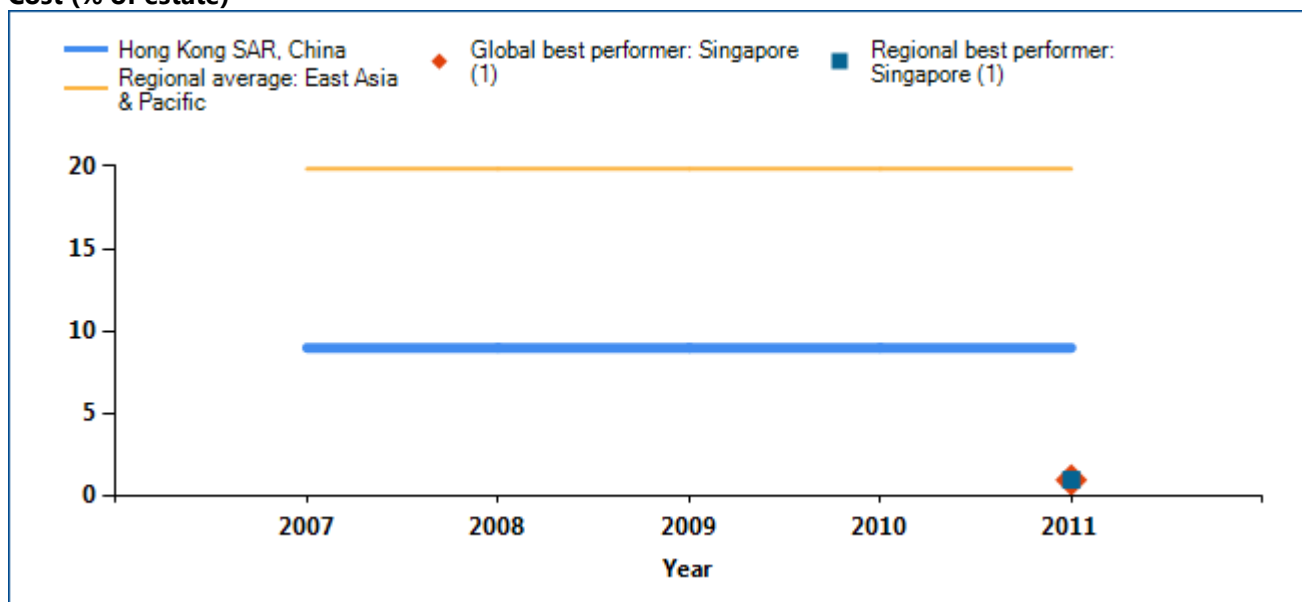
SAR, China on ways to improve the efficiency of insolvency proceedings. And changes in regional averages can show where Hong Kong SAR, China is keeping up—and where it is falling behind.

Figure 11.2 Has resolving insolvency become easier over time?

Time (years)

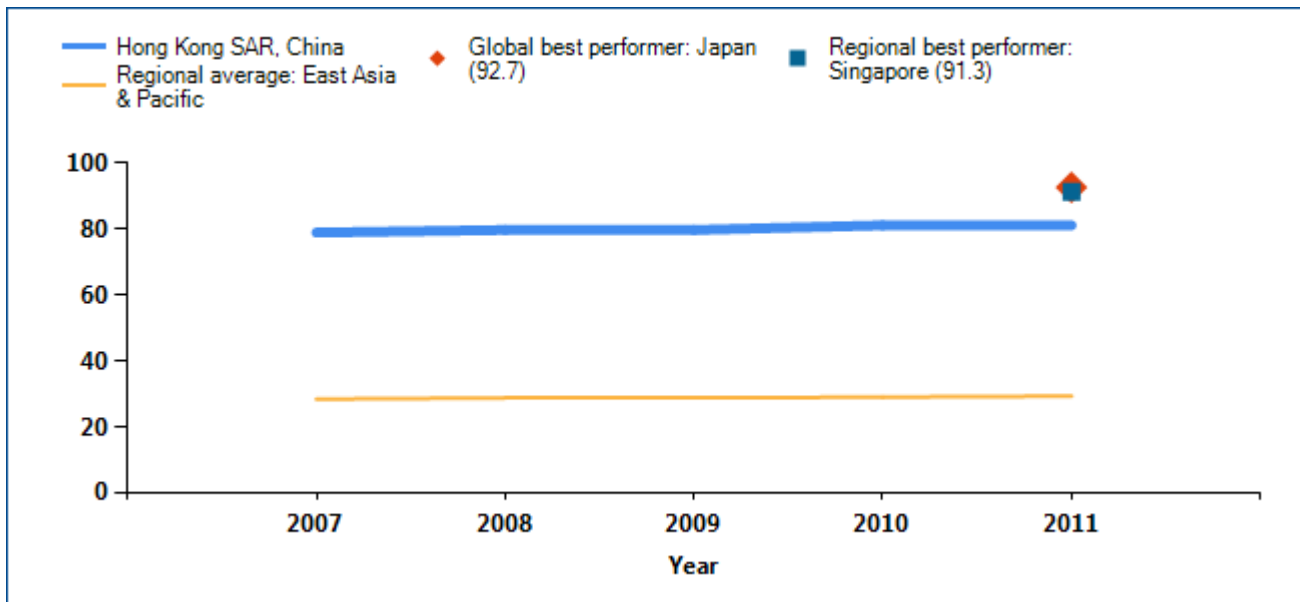


Cost (% of estate)



RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

Recovery rate (cents on the dollar)



Note: The economy with the best performance regionally on each indicator, and the economy with the best performance globally, are included as benchmarks. In some cases 2 or more economies share the top regional or global ranking on an indicator. In cases where no data are displayed above for the economy, this indicates that the economy has received a “no practice” mark; see the data notes for details.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

RESOLVING INSOLVENCY

A well-balanced bankruptcy system distinguishes companies that are financially distressed but economically viable from inefficient companies that should be liquidated. But in some insolvency systems even viable businesses are liquidated. This is starting to

change. Many recent reforms of bankruptcy laws have been aimed at helping more of the viable businesses survive. What insolvency reforms has *Doing Business* recorded in Hong Kong SAR, China (table 11.2)?

Table 11.2 How has Hong Kong SAR, China made resolving insolvency easier—or not?
By *Doing Business* report year

DB Year	Reform
DB2012	No reform.
DB2011	No reform.
DB2010	No reform.
DB2009	Trustees were granted more power in bankruptcy proceedings, a change expected to make the liquidation procedure more efficient.

Note: For information on reforms in earlier years (back to DB2005), see the *Doing Business* reports for these years, available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Source: *Doing Business* database.

DATA NOTES

The indicators presented and analyzed in *Doing Business* measure business regulation and the protection of property rights—and their effect on businesses, especially small and medium-size domestic firms. First, the indicators document the complexity of regulation, such as the number of procedures to start a business or to register and transfer commercial property. Second, they gauge the time and cost of achieving a regulatory goal or complying with regulation, such as the time and cost to enforce a contract, go through bankruptcy or trade across borders. Third, they measure the extent of legal protections of property, for example, the protections of investors against looting by company directors or the range of assets that can be used as collateral according to secured transactions laws. Fourth, a set of indicators documents the tax burden on businesses. Finally, a set of data covers different aspects of employment regulation.

The data for all sets of indicators in *Doing Business 2012* are for June 2011.³

Methodology

The *Doing Business* data are collected in a standardized way. To start, the *Doing Business* team, with academic advisers, designs a questionnaire. The questionnaire uses a simple business case to ensure comparability across economies and over time—with assumptions about the legal form of the business, its size, its location and the nature of its operations. Questionnaires are administered through more than 9,028 local experts, including lawyers, business consultants, accountants, freight forwarders, government officials and other professionals routinely administering or advising on legal and regulatory requirements. These experts have several rounds of interaction with the *Doing Business* team, involving conference calls, written correspondence and visits by the team. For *Doing Business 2012* team members visited 40 economies to verify data and recruit respondents. The data from questionnaires are subjected to numerous rounds of verification, leading to revisions or expansions of the information collected.

³ The data for paying taxes refer to January – December 2010.

ECONOMY CHARACTERISTICS

Gross national income (GNI) per capita

Doing Business 2012 reports 2010 income per capita as published in the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2011*. Income is calculated using the Atlas method (current US\$). For cost indicators expressed as a percentage of income per capita, 2010 GNI in U.S. dollars is used as the denominator. Data were not available from the World Bank for Afghanistan; Australia; The Bahamas; Bahrain; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Cyprus; Djibouti; the Islamic Republic of Iran; Kuwait; New Zealand; Oman; Puerto Rico (territory of the United States); Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Suriname; Taiwan, China; the United Arab Emirates; West Bank and Gaza; and the Republic of Yemen. In these cases GDP or GNP per capita data and growth rates from the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook database and the Economist Intelligence Unit were used.

Region and income group

Doing Business uses the World Bank regional and income group classifications, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/data/countryclass>. The World Bank does not assign regional classifications to high-income economies. For the purpose of the *Doing Business* report, high-income OECD economies are assigned the "regional" classification *OECD high income*. Figures and tables presenting regional averages include economies from all income groups (low, lower middle, upper middle and high income).

Population

Doing Business 2012 reports midyear 2010 population statistics as published in *World Development Indicators 2011*.

The *Doing Business* methodology offers several advantages. It is transparent, using factual information about what laws and regulations say and allowing multiple interactions with local respondents to clarify potential misinterpretations of questions. Having representative samples of respondents is not an issue;

Doing Business is not a statistical survey, and the texts of the relevant laws and regulations are collected and answers checked for accuracy. The methodology is inexpensive and easily replicable, so data can be collected in a large sample of economies. Because standard assumptions are used in the data collection, comparisons and benchmarks are valid across economies. Finally, the data not only highlight the extent of specific regulatory obstacles to business but also identify their source and point to what might be reformed.

Information on the methodology for each *Doing Business* topic can be found on the *Doing Business* website at <http://www.doingbusiness.org/methodology/>.

Limits to what is measured

The *Doing Business* methodology has 5 limitations that should be considered when interpreting the data. First, the collected data refer to businesses in the economy's largest business city and may not be representative of regulation in other parts of the economy. To address this limitation, subnational *Doing Business* indicators were created (see the section on subnational *Doing Business* indicators). Second, the data often focus on a specific business form—generally a limited liability company (or its legal equivalent) of a specified size—and may not be representative of the regulation on other businesses, for example, sole proprietorships. Third, transactions described in a standardized case scenario refer to a specific set of issues and may not represent the full set of issues a business encounters. Fourth, the measures of time involve an element of judgment by the expert respondents. When sources indicate different estimates, the time indicators reported in *Doing Business* represent the median values of several responses given under the assumptions of the standardized case.

Finally, the methodology assumes that a business has full information on what is required and does not waste time when completing procedures. In practice, completing a procedure may take longer if the business lacks information or is unable to follow up promptly. Alternatively, the business may choose to disregard some burdensome procedures. For both reasons the time delays reported in *Doing Business* 2012 would differ from the recollection of

entrepreneurs reported in the World Bank Enterprise Surveys or other perception surveys.

Subnational *Doing Business* indicators

This year *Doing Business* published a subnational study for the Philippines and a regional report for Southeast Europe covering 7 economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia) and 22 cities. It also published a city profile for Juba, in the Republic of South Sudan.

The subnational studies point to differences in business regulation and its implementation—as well as in the pace of regulatory reform—across cities in the same economy. For several economies subnational studies are now periodically updated to measure change over time or to expand geographic coverage to additional cities. This year that is the case for the subnational studies in the Philippines; the regional report in Southeast Europe; the ongoing studies in Italy, Kenya and the United Arab Emirates; and the projects implemented jointly with local think tanks in Indonesia, Mexico and the Russian Federation.

Besides the subnational *Doing Business* indicators, *Doing Business* conducted a pilot study this year on the second largest city in 3 large economies to assess within-country variations. The study collected data for Rio de Janeiro in addition to São Paulo in Brazil, for Beijing in addition to Shanghai in China and for St. Petersburg in addition to Moscow in Russia.

Changes in what is measured

The methodology for 3 of the *Doing Business* topics was updated this year—getting credit, dealing with construction permits and paying taxes.

First, for getting credit, the scoring of one of the 10 components of the strength of legal rights index was amended to recognize additional protections of secured creditors and borrowers. Previously the highest score of 1 was assigned if secured creditors were not subject to an automatic stay or moratorium on enforcement procedures when a debtor entered a court-supervised reorganization procedure. Now the highest score of 1 is also assigned if the law provides secured creditors with grounds for relief from an

automatic stay or moratorium (for example, if the movable property is in danger) or sets a time limit for the automatic stay.

Second, because the ease of doing business index now includes the getting electricity indicators, procedures, time and cost related to obtaining an electricity connection were removed from the dealing with construction permits indicators.

Third, a threshold has been introduced for the total tax rate for the purpose of calculating the ranking on the ease of paying taxes. All economies with a total tax rate below the threshold (which will be calculated and adjusted on a yearly basis) will now receive the same ranking on the total tax rate indicator. The threshold is not based on any underlying theory. Instead, it is meant to emphasize the purpose of the indicator: to highlight economies where the tax burden on business is high relative to the tax burden in other economies. Giving the same ranking to all economies whose total tax rate is below the threshold avoids awarding economies in the scoring for having an unusually low total tax rate, often for reasons unrelated to government policies toward enterprises. For example, economies that are very small or that are rich in natural resources do not need to levy broad-based taxes.

Data challenges and revisions

Most laws and regulations underlying the *Doing Business* data are available on the *Doing Business* website at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>. All the sample questionnaires and the details underlying the indicators are also published on the website. Questions on the methodology and challenges to data can be submitted through the website's "Ask a Question" function at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.

Ease of doing business and distance to frontier

This year's report presents results for 2 aggregate measures: the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business and a new measure, the "distance to frontier." While the ease of doing business ranking compares economies with one another at a point in time, the distance to frontier measure shows how much the

regulatory environment for local entrepreneurs in each economy has changed over time.

Ease of doing business

The ease of doing business index ranks economies from 1 to 183. For each economy the ranking is calculated as the simple average of the percentile rankings on each of the 10 topics included in the index in *Doing Business 2012*: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, resolving insolvency and, new this year, getting electricity. The employing workers indicators are not included in this year's aggregate ease of doing business ranking. In addition to this year's ranking, *Doing Business* presents a comparable ranking for the previous year, adjusted for any changes in methodology as well as additions of economies or topics.⁴

Construction of the ease of doing business index

Here is one example of how the ease of doing business index is constructed. In the Republic of Korea it takes 5 procedures, 7 days and 14.6% of annual income per capita in fees to open a business. There is no minimum capital required. On these 4 indicators Korea ranks in the 18th, 14th, 53rd and 0 percentiles. So on average Korea ranks in the 21st percentile on the ease of starting a business. It ranks in the 12th percentile on getting credit, 25th percentile on paying taxes, 8th percentile on enforcing contracts, 7th percentile on resolving insolvency and so on. Higher rankings indicate simpler regulation and stronger protection of property rights. The simple average of Korea's percentile rankings on all topics is 21st. When all economies are ordered by their average percentile rankings, Korea stands at 8 in the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business.

More complex aggregation methods—such as principal components and unobserved components—

⁴ In case of revisions to the methodology or corrections to the underlying data, the data are back-calculated to provide a comparable time series since the year the relevant economy or topic was first included in the data set. The time series is available on the *Doing Business* website (<http://www.doingbusiness.org>). The *Doing Business* report publishes yearly rankings for the year of publication as well as the previous year to shed light on year-to-year developments. Six topics and more than 50 economies have been added since the inception of the project. Earlier rankings on the ease of doing business are therefore not comparable.

yield a ranking nearly identical to the simple average used by *Doing Business*.⁵ Thus, *Doing Business* uses the simplest method: weighting all topics equally and, within each topic, giving equal weight to each of the topic components.⁶

If an economy has no laws or regulations covering a specific area—for example, insolvency—it receives a “no practice” mark. Similarly, an economy receives a “no practice” or “not possible” mark if regulation exists but is never used in practice or if a competing regulation prohibits such practice. Either way, a “no practice” mark puts the economy at the bottom of the ranking on the relevant indicator.

The ease of doing business index is limited in scope. It does not account for an economy’s proximity to large markets, the quality of its infrastructure services (other than services related to trading across borders and getting electricity), the strength of its financial system, the security of property from theft and looting, its macroeconomic conditions or the strength of underlying institutions.

Variability of economies’ rankings across topics

Each indicator set measures a different aspect of the business regulatory environment. The rankings of an economy can vary, sometimes significantly, across indicator sets. The average correlation coefficient between the 10 indicator sets included in the aggregate ranking is 0.36, and the coefficients between any 2 sets of indicators range from 0.17 (between protecting investors and getting electricity) to 0.57 (between starting a business and protecting investors). These correlations suggest that economies rarely score universally well or universally badly on the indicators.

⁵ See Simeon Djankov, Darshini Manraj, Caralee McLiesh and Rita Ramalho, “*Doing Business* Indicators: Why Aggregate, and How to Do It” (World Bank, Washington, DC, 2005). Principal components and unobserved components methods yield a ranking nearly identical to that from the simple average method because both these methods assign roughly equal weights to the topics, since the pairwise correlations among indicators do not differ much. An alternative to the simple average method is to give different weights to the topics, depending on which are considered of more or less importance in the context of a specific economy.

⁶ A technical note on the different aggregation and weighting methods is available on the *Doing Business* website (<http://www.doingbusiness.org>).

Consider the example of Canada. It stands at 12 in the aggregate ranking on the ease of doing business. Its ranking is 3 on both starting a business and resolving insolvency, and 5 on protecting investors. But its ranking is only 59 on enforcing contracts, 42 on trading across borders and 156 on getting electricity.

Variation in performance across the indicator sets is not at all unusual. It reflects differences in the degree of priority that government authorities give to particular areas of business regulation reform and the ability of different government agencies to deliver tangible results in their area of responsibility.

Economies that improved the most across 3 or more Doing Business topics in 2010/11

Doing Business 2012 uses a simple method to calculate which economies improved the most in the ease of doing business. First, it selects the economies that in 2010/11 implemented regulatory reforms making it easier to do business in 3 or more of the 10 topics included in this year’s ease of doing business ranking.⁷ Thirty economies meet this criterion: Armenia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Georgia, Korea, Latvia, Liberia, FYR Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Peru, Russia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands, South Africa and Ukraine. Second, *Doing Business* ranks these economies on the increase in their ranking on the ease of doing business from the previous year using comparable rankings.

Selecting the economies that implemented regulatory reforms in at least 3 topics and improved the most in the aggregate ranking is intended to highlight economies with ongoing, broad-based reform programs.

Distance to frontier measure

This year’s report introduces a new measure to illustrate how the regulatory environment for local businesses in each economy has changed over time. The distance to frontier measure illustrates the distance of an economy to the “frontier” and shows

⁷ *Doing Business* reforms making it more difficult to do business are subtracted from the total number of those making it easier to do business.

the extent to which the economy has closed this gap over time. The frontier is a score derived from the most efficient practice or highest score achieved on each of the component indicators in 9 *Doing Business* indicator sets (excluding the employing workers and getting electricity indicators) by any economy since 2005. In starting a business, for example, New Zealand has achieved the highest performance on the time (1 day), Canada and New Zealand on the number of procedures required (1), Denmark and Slovenia on the cost (0% of income per capita) and Australia on the paid-in minimum capital requirement (0% of income per capita).

Calculating the distance to frontier for each economy involves 2 main steps. First, individual indicator scores are normalized to a common unit. To do so, each of the 32 component indicators y is rescaled to $(y - \min)/(\max - \min)$, with the minimum value (\min) representing the frontier—the highest performance on that indicator across all economies since 2005. Second, for each economy the scores obtained for individual indicators are aggregated through simple averaging into one distance to frontier score. An economy's distance to the frontier is indicated on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the frontier and 100 the lowest performance.

The difference between an economy's distance to frontier score in 2005 and its score in 2011 illustrates the extent to which the economy has closed the gap to the frontier over time.

The maximum (\max) and minimum (\min) observed values are computed for the 174 economies included in the *Doing Business* sample since 2005 and for all years (from 2005 to 2011). The year 2005 was chosen as the baseline for the economy sample because it was the first year in which data were available for the majority of economies (a total of 174) and for all 9 indicator sets included in the measure. To mitigate the effects of extreme outliers in the distributions of the rescaled data (very few economies need 694 days to complete the procedures to start a business, but many need 9 days), the maximum (\max) is defined as the 95th percentile of the pooled data for all economies and all years for each indicator.

Take Colombia, which has a score of 0.21 on the distance to frontier measure for 2011. This score indicates that the economy is 21 percentage points away from the frontier constructed from the best performances across all economies and all years. Colombia was further from the frontier in 2005, with a score of 0.43. The difference between the scores shows an improvement over time.

RESOURCES ON THE *DOING BUSINESS* WEBSITE

Current features

News on the *Doing Business* project

<http://www.doingbusiness.org>

Rankings

How economies rank—from 1 to 183

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings/>

Reports

Access to *Doing Business* reports as well as subnational and regional reports, reform case studies and customized economy and regional profiles

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/>

Methodology

The methodologies and research papers underlying *Doing Business*

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/methodology/>

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Abstracts of papers on *Doing Business* topics and related policy issues

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***Doing Business* reforms**

Short summaries of DB2012 business regulation reforms, lists of reforms since DB2008 and a ranking simulation tool

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/reforms/>

Historical data

Customized data sets since DB2004

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/custom-query/>

Law library

Online collection of business laws and regulations relating to business and gender issues

<http://www.doingbusiness.org/law-library/>

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